WONDERS
IN
MONSTERLAND

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WONDERS IN MONSTERLAND

THE SONG OF THE DINOSAURS

WONDERS IN MONSTERLAND

BY

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AUTHOR OF "IN THE SHADOW OF THE PAGODA"
"WITH THE JUNGLE FOLK"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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NOTE

This book is the outcome of the Rev. Henry N. Hutchinson's suggestion that the author should "write a book for children, to introduce them to the dead monsters of long ago." Care has been exercised to avoid encroaching upon the province of the teacher.

PREFACE

Science craved speech with youth one day,
And sought the playground babes to find,
They cried, "A Witch!" and ran away,
Not one dared even look behind.

Thought Science, "Is my face so grim
That children recognising it
Fly like scared birds? I'll just ask him
To help me in disguising it."

He *was a motley vagrant who*
Pleased with the jingle of his bells,
And Science saw how children flew
To hear the tale that Folly tells.

"Lend me," she said, "that suit you wear,
That I may speak with children too,
This cloak of mine creates a scare;
In your attire they'll think I'm you."

PREFACE

So Folly lent his cap and bells :
He loved the children, and he knew
That stories such as Science tells
Delight the folk she tells them to.

But Science, when she put them on,
Found out at once they did not fit,
"Why," cried she, "did I motley don ?
I don't resemble you a bit !"

"It's sad," said Folly, "but it's true,
In motley garb you don't look well ;
Stay ! I'll pretend that I am you,
I'll *tell the tale you want to tell !"*

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE MOA BIRD	1
II.	THE SEA-COW AND HIPPARION	25
III.	HOLLOW-TREE HOUSE	43
IV.	THE TIGER	61
V.	THE TIGER'S SUPPER-PARTY	77
VI.	THE MASTER DON	95
VII.	BY TRAIN TO 50,000 YEARS AGO	111
VIII.	TOMMY THERIUM AND BRONTOPS	125
IX.	BRONTOPS AND DINO THERIUM	141
X.	THE TINJENS FAMILY	155
XI.	PHEE AND OH-DON'T-'OP TERYX	171
XII.	HORNY HEAD AND CLAY O'SAUR	189
XIII.	ICKY ORNIS AND H.R.H. THE SEA SERPENT	207
XIV.	THE FLYMAN	225
XV.	A DINOSAUR'S PARTY	241

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Song of the Dinosaurs (*coloured*)	*Frontispiece*	
A great stag stared at them (*coloured*)	*To face page*	10
"Quirrrrooo-hup!"	*On page*	14
The Moa's expression became pleasanter	„	17
The Moa's song	*To face page*	20
The face came up again	„ „	28
"Hipparion is my name"	*On page*	35
One of Hipparion's tremendous jumps	„	40
He came forward grumbling	*To face page*	46
Mr. Bates thinking very hard	*On page*	51
"The very next time it happens, I give you a month's warning"	„	58
Mr. Mackie Rodus walked in	*To face page*	64
The Tiger walking between them	*On page*	71
He turned McAcus out on the floor	*To face page*	72
"It's nae duty o' mine to ca' him"	„ „	74
Hi shuffled all round the room	*On page*	79
The bones did not give him the least trouble	„	82
The Tiger got up on pretence of stretching himself	„	85
He waved his fore-leg to mark the time	*To face page*	90
"I am the Master Don!"	*On page*	103
He took up a cocoanut and thumped his head with it	„	107
Every snore brought down a shower of cocoanuts	„	109
Mr. Mackie Rodus was at the gate	„	121
A crowd of strange animals swept them along (*coloured*)	*To face page*	122

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I do all the explaining for the folks down here"	*On page*	131
Tommy resting all his weight on their hands .	„	135
Tommy directing Brontops from the banks .	*To face page*	140
He shook hands with his trunk . . .	*On page*	146
Dino, turning his tail towards his friend, set to work to kick him	*To face page*	146
The wind shrieked past them as they fell now	*On page*	161
"They're a new sort of creeper," said Mrs. Tinjens	„	164
The Family seat	*To face page*	168
"A Coolness"	*On page*	174
They shook hands with him at once . .	„	177
"See me run," said Phee	„	180
They found Oh-don't-'Op Teryx . . .	„	184
Oh-don't-'Op Teryx gaped	*To face page*	192
"It's just like a railway tunnel" . . .	„ „	194
What the monster was like	*On page*	196
"I *am* very delicate!"	„	199
The fight	„	203
Clay singing	„	205
"I ought to be a bird"	„	211
"Hi! Icky!" shouted Clay	„	215
"What can I do for you?"	„	217
The Sea Serpent	*To face page*	220
The Song of a Generous Active Verb . .	*On page*	230
"Can you take them both?"	„	235
"How jolly!" said Walter; "you can see such a distance" (*coloured*) . . .	*To face page*	238
"So kind of you to come!"	„ „	244
Lady Megalo arranging her train . . .	*On page*	245
"Fly for your lives!"	*To face page*	256

CHAPTER I

THE MOA BIRD

WONDERS IN MONSTERLAND

CHAPTER I

THE MOA BIRD

WALTER and Jenny had hunted everywhere for that golf-ball—up the path, along the hedge, in the ditches under the great dock-leaves, and they could not find it anywhere; and now they were quite tired of the search, and were sitting to rest in the shade of the chestnut trees on the brow of the hill. It was a very hot afternoon: there was not a cloud in the sky, and every leaf was still. In the meadow below, Farmer Williams' old cart-horse stood in the shade switching his tail and stamping, too lazy even to eat.

"I don't care," said Walter, digging at a dandelion with his golf-club; "it's much too

hot to play golf or anything else, and I've got another ball at home."

"It's a pity it was the new ball," said Jenny; "you shouldn't hit so far, Wally."

"*That* wasn't far: nothing to the shots I've made when you haven't been with me. I tell you what, Jen, I wish Mr. Anson had been here."

"Why?" asked Jenny; "you don't like Mr. Anson to take us walks, because he won't let you climb trees, or wade in the brook without taking your boots off, or anything."

"This is different. He is always poking about looking for stones and things, and every one says he is good at finding things, so he might find that ball."

"Perhaps he might," said Jenny doubtfully. She thought of the tutor peering about through his spectacles with his hammer in his hand, and did not think he would be very quick at finding a golf-ball in long grass. "I expect that's another sort of finding, Wally."

"I don't see any difference," said Walter, lying back and tilting his hat over his eyes. "I wonder why Mr. Anson is so fond of

collecting stones: now if it was eggs, a fellow could understand it."

"I heard father say Mr. Anson was a very clever jollygist," said Jenny; "but I don't know what that is; do you, Wally?"

"It means—it means—well, a man who looks for stones, and puts labels on them, and keeps them in a cupboard with a glass front, is a jollygist," said Walter; "but I don't see anything very jolly about it."

"No more do I. When we went to Scarborough I collected shells and some *lovely* pebbles; but they were pretty. Mr. Anson's stones are quite ugly things."

"Yet he is a sensible sort of chap in some ways," said Walter kindly; "he knows a lot."

"He looks wise," agreed Jenny.

"That's only because he wears specs. If Mr. Anson were really and truly wise—like father or the Vicar—he wouldn't say the things he does."

"What does he say?" asked Jenny. "Does he tell fairy stories? Father tells fairy stories."

"Father doesn't believe the stories he tells us; Mr. Anson does believe the stories he tells me in lesson-time."

"But what are they?" persisted Jenny, thinking Walter's lesson-time couldn't be so dreadful if Mr. Anson told stories.

"Well," said Walter, sitting up, "I'll tell you. Look here, Jen; I'm going to be old Anson, and you're going to be me."

"Go on," said Jenny, folding her hands in her lap to pretend she was being taught.

"You must not, my dear boy," began Walter, in a false voice to imitate Mr. Anson—"you must not suppose that the animals we see around us have always been as we see them now. A very great many years agoe——"

"How many?" asked Jenny.

"I never discourage intel'gent questions. (Don't giggle, Jen, you silly.) How many years agoe is not known exactly, but millions of years agoe. In those far-off days"—Walter waved his hand towards the opposite hill to show how far off they were—"in those far-off days there were great beasts like kangaroos, only so tall, that they could look in at your nur-ser-ray windowe."

"I don't believe that," said Jenny.

Walter stopped.

"When *I* interrupt old Anson," he said, "I

get pretty well jawed; if *you* interrupt me while you're me and I'm old Anson, I'll jaw you so frightfully you'd wish you'd never been born."

"I'm *so* sorry; please forgive me," said Jenny.

"The names of these animals," resumed Walter in his false voice, "are derived from the Greek, and are soe hard, I will not trubble you with them. The oldest animals known to jolly-gists are called Dinosaurs——"

"I thought the names were so hard," said Jenny.

"That's an easy one," said Walter. "But look here, Jen, if you interrupt again, I won't go on."

Jenny said she was sorry, and began to make a daisy-chain. Walter objected to this; he wasn't allowed to make daisy-chains in lesson-time, and she mustn't.

Jenny thought if she was allowed to make it, she should remember that she wasn't to interrupt.

"Perhaps that's true," said Walter; "it's worth trying anyhow. I'll stretch a point, as old Anson says—I'll stretch a point."

This having been arranged, Walter began again—

"Some of these animals were tremendously curious. There were sea-serpents thirty yards long, and flying dragons with bodies like lizards and bat's wings. Then there were tremendous elephants with four tusks; and birds nearly four yards high, something like ostriches, only they hadn't any wings; and other birds like the stuffed heron in the hall, only they had teeth in their bills, and were as tall as father; and there were deer nearly as big as elephants."

Walter had grown so much interested in these wonderful animals that he forgot he was Mr. Anson, and spoke in his own voice; he also seemed to forget that he did not believe in them. I think myself he *did* half believe in them.

"There were ever so many more creatures—snakes, and crocodiles, and things he told me about," said Walter, "only I've forgotten a good lot of them."

"They're all dead now, aren't they?" asked Jenny a little anxiously.

"Millions of years ago—the very biggest; some were alive hundreds of years ago, but they're all dead now. Do you believe there ever *were* such monsters, Jen?"

"I don't know," said Jenny, thinking of the dragons and strange creatures in her fairy-tale book. How could people have invented such things if they never lived? "Anyhow, I'm glad they are all dead now," she went on. "Cows are bad enough when you meet them in the lane."

"Not if you shout at them and wave your arms about," said Walter, with his manly air. "Then the cows are afraid."

"I wonder if it's by being a jollygist that Mr. Anson knows about these old animals?" said Jenny, who did not want to talk about cows lest Walter should begin teasing.

"You've just guessed it," said Walter. "He said you found out these animals by being a jollygist."

"But what have the stones Mr. Anson collects got to do with animals?" asked Jenny.

Walter munched a stalk of grass while he tried to remember how Mr. Anson had explained it: Jenny tossed away her daisy-chain, and lay with her face in the cool grass: the afternoon was so hot and still, she was growing sleepy.

"It is like this," said Walter at last. "You

look about in gravel-pits and quarries and places like that, and often you find the bones of animals that lived thousands of years ago, all turned into stone; and only a jollygist knows when stones have been bones."

"Bones—stones. Wonder how they got down there?" said Jenny sleepily.

"I expect the earth grew up over them," said Walter vaguely.

. . . . . .

"I didn't remember that the hill was like this," said Jenny, sitting up. "Look at those lovely grass stairs going down to the wood at the bottom. Let's run down to the wood, Wally."

"Come along," said Walter, getting up; and away they ran down the wide grass stairs hand in hand.

The wood was very still and quiet, and the children wandered on for a long time without seeing anything alive except a great stag with spreading horns, which stood and stared at them for a moment before it swung round and bounded away with a snort of fear. It seemed as if nobody ever came into the wood, for there

A GREAT STAG STARED AT THEM

were no paths, no signs that a wood-cutter ever came, and not even a board to say you weren't allowed to go there.

It was a beautiful wood; there were such numbers of flowers that Jenny's hands were soon full, and she had to ask Walter to carry a great bunch that she might pick more. By-and-by the trees became smaller and fewer, and presently the children found themselves in the open fields again; only they were not like the fields they knew, for there were no hedges.

"I'm getting hungry," said Walter presently. "Let's go on till we come to a village, and get some buns or something at a shop."

They ran on. At length the grass began to grow thin and scanty, and before long the children found themselves on soft sand, dreadfully tiring to walk on, because it was so deep and got into their boots at every step.

"It's more like wading than walking," Walter said, mopping his face with his handkerchief. "I do hope we've come the right way. I don't see any sign of a village, or any house at all," he added, shading his eyes to look round.

"Nothing but sand and palm-trees," said

Jenny. "Palm-trees are pretty, I think, but they don't give much shade."

They plodded along until they came to a number of smooth, cream-coloured stones half buried in the sand. It was hotter than ever, and still there was no house in sight.

"I'm tired," said Jenny; "let's sit down and rest on these stones for a little bit."

She was just going to seat herself on one from which she had brushed the sand when a loud, harsh voice from a clump of palms and bushes a little way off shouted, "Hi you, there! Come out of my nest!"

It was a huge bird like an ostrich, but twice as tall, which stalked out on the sand.

"What are you doing there?" called the bird again sharply. "Leave my eggs alone this minute! I don't want *you* to hatch them."

"These must be it's great eggs," said Jenny, "and we thought they were stones. What a funny mistake! But I suppose we had better go away."

"All right!" Walter shouted. "We don't want to hatch them; we've got something else to do."

"You were just going to sit," answered the bird; "I saw you with my own eyes! *Now*, where are you going?"

What it meant was, "Look where you are going," because there were twenty of its eggs there, some buried nearly out of sight, and it was afraid the children would step on them; but Walter, not understanding, answered, "We are looking for a shop where we can buy buns for tea."

"Well, my nest isn't a shop!" screamed the bird; "you don't want eggs, I suppose, for tea?"

"But we do eat eggs," said Jenny eagerly, for she was very hungry; "and I should like one very much if——"

"Eggs!" shrieked the bird. "*My* eggs!! To EAT for tea!!! Quirrrrooo-hup!" It flung its head forward, and starting with a lurch, raced straight at them with tremendous strides.

"Stand still where you are, Jen!" said Walter, catching her hand. "She will smash her eggs if she tries to get at us."

Jenny stood; it was terrible to wait there while the furious bird rushed at them faster than

any horse; but Walter was right; she stopped suddenly in a cloud of sand, when another stride would have taken her right upon them and her eggs.

"My eggs!" she screamed again; "you were

"QUIRRRROOO-HUP!"

going to eat my eggs for your tea!—carry them off from under my very beak, after all the trouble I've had to lay them and arrange

with the sun to do the hatching! Quirrrrooo-hup!"

She was in a dreadful passion. She danced round and round her nest, kicking up clouds of sand and making savage pecks at the children as they stood among the eggs. At every peck she exclaimed, "Quirrrrooo-hup!" I do not know what that word means, but it sounded terrible when the bird said it with a snap of the beak.

"I say!" shouted Walter, as one of Mr. Anson's stories occurred to him, "I think there must be a mistake. Are you the Moa?"

"Yes, I'm the Moa!" bawled the bird; "I'll teach you to meddle with my eggs," and it danced round the nest faster than ever.

"Now look here," said Walter, when at last she stopped quite tired out and sank down with her breast on her toes, "we didn't know. We couldn't tell that these were your eggs, and you can see for yourself that we couldn't eat one of these great things if we had nothing else for a week."

The Moa cocked her head on one side and grinned at him.

"I'm too old a bird to be taken in so easily as that," she said. "Next you'll tell me you don't live in a cave, I suppose?"

"No, we don't live in a cave; so there," said Jenny.

"And don't wear skins for clothes?"

"Certainly not," answered Jenny. "Did you ever see a skin like that?" she added, holding out her frock.

"Well, come out of my nest anyway," said the Moa sulkily. "At least don't come out any way; choose your way carefully."

"I never saw such splendid eggs," said Jenny, stepping among them with a great show of care.

"Enormous great things," said Walter.

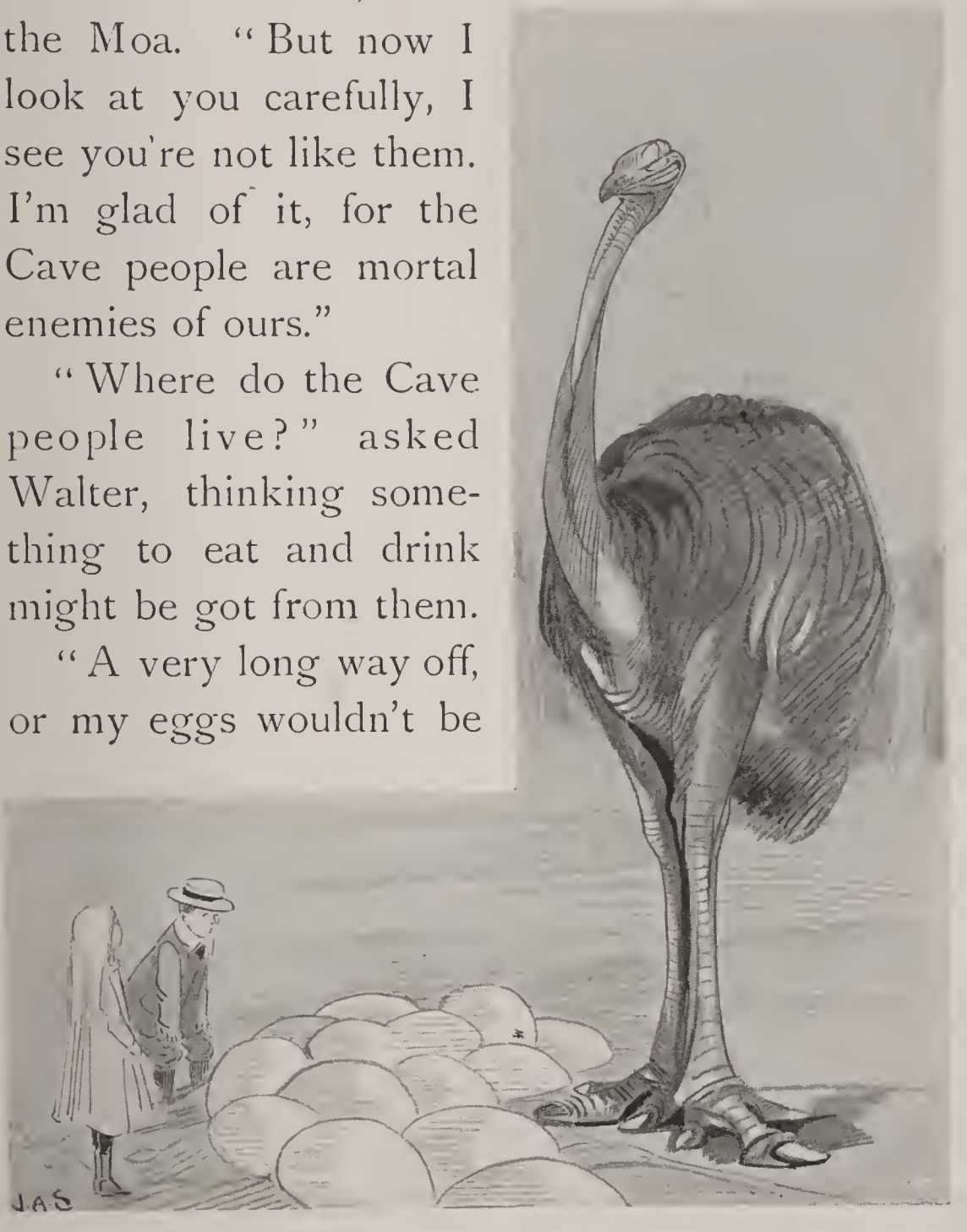
The Moa's expression became pleasanter after these compliments. She stalked round the eggs, counted them, said there were none missing, and she only hoped none would be addled by the fright.

"I'm sure I hope not, too," said Jenny; "I am so sorry for our mistake. But will you tell me why you thought we lived in a cave and wore skin clothes?"

"All the humans I ever met do live in caves and dress in skins," said the Moa. "But now I look at you carefully, I see you're not like them. I'm glad of it, for the Cave people are mortal enemies of ours."

"Where do the Cave people live?" asked Walter, thinking something to eat and drink might be got from them.

"A very long way off, or my eggs wouldn't be



THE MOA'S EXPRESSION BECAME PLEASANTER

here," replied the Moa. "And if you don't want to be clubbed on the head, or caught in a pit, you'll keep away from the Cave people. Such a life as they lead us, stealing our eggs and hunting us about!"

"We must have given you a fright," said Jenny. "However, you gave *us* one, I can tell you."

The Moa laughed quite good-humouredly. "I'm glad my husband wasn't at home," she said. "He would have charged right in among the eggs, and kicked you both to death in a minute."

"I am so tired," said Jenny after a time.

"Shall I sing you to sleep?" asked the Moa eagerly. "I'm a very motherly bird; a family of fifteen or twenty chicks to bring up every year makes one motherly, and I feel for you. Let me sing you to sleep."

"Thanks, it's very kind of you; but I don't want to sleep. Only to rest a little."

"Then you certainly must let me sing to you," said the Moa with a determined air. "Come along. The song you want is, 'The Moa and her Chicks.' It's a most refreshing

song ; very lovely, and much admired ; the tune has a ripple in it which just matches your hair."

Jenny and Walter didn't understand how that could be, but she was so anxious they should hear the song, that they gave way and followed her to the little palm-grove, where they sat in the shade and waited for the Moa to begin. She sat down too, stretched her neck, and opening her beak, began to make curious noises in her throat.

"Please don't sing if you don't feel quite well," said Jenny politely.

"I am in enjoyment of excellent health, I thank you," said the Moa stiffly. "I was simply turning over my notes to find the one I begin on."

And without more ado she threw back her head and began to sing nearly as fast as a turkey gobbles. It was all the children could do to catch the words—

"Upon a day some eggs I lay, and leave the sun to hatch them,
And chicks come out so big and stout, I have to run to catch them.

They roam the sand on every hand, those birds of dazzling beauty,
And I stand by, with loving eye, to teach the dears their duty.

They learn to scratch and peck and snatch, and kick like any donkey;
And if a chick grows thin and sick, I dose that little monkey.

You'd feel surprise to see the size a year-old Moa grows to,
Six feet and more a chick can score—ay, eight feet if it chose to.

In time some boy's loud amorous noise sounds pleading for my daughter,
I let her go, with tears of woe, to practise all I've taught her.

But it is good if half your brood are spared to go and marry,
Cave-men abound, and we have found what horrid sticks they carry.

The cruel things use stones and slings, and oh, it's such a pang
To see a chick killed by that stick, the cave-man's boomerang.

Our legs are thick, and we can kick, and if we are offended,
Let cave-man fall: well, that is all! *that* cave-man can't be mended.

THE MOA'S SONG

But when bereft, forlorn I'm left, I lay another nestful,
And sleep and think, and eat and drink, and lead a life
so restful,

Until the first new egg shall burst, another and another;
And I awake to undertake fresh duties as a mother."

"That's all," said the Moa. "You feel rested now, I'm sure."

"Thank you very much," said Jenny, "I do feel rested."

"It's wonderful the effect that song has," said the Moa, shaking her head slowly. "I've sung it to creatures when they've been so tired they couldn't lift a foot, and four or five verses refreshed them so much, they've been able to get up and run away without waiting for the rest!"

"*Really!*" said Jenny, who would have run away from the noise herself if she had not been afraid of hurting the bird's feelings.

"Fact, I assure you."

They all sat silent for a few minutes after this. At length Jenny, who was dreadfully thirsty, said, "I wonder if you could tell us where we might get a drink of milk?"

"Go and ask the Sea-cow," said the Moa

promptly; "you are sure to find her grazing close to the seashore over yonder."

"Thank you," said Jenny, getting up, "we will go and ask her. But we made such a mistake over your name, we should like to know how to tell the Sea-cow when we see her."

"You should tell the Sea-cow in good English, and quite politely, that you want some milk, please."

"No, no," said Walter. "What my sister meant was, 'What is the Sea-cow like?'"

"The Sea-cow is like—*exactly* like a man at tea."

"Like a man at tea! How very funny."

"Not at all," said the Moa; "good-bye to you."

The children said good-bye to her, and started in the direction she pointed out; but they had not gone far when she called to them—

"If you don't see the Sea-cow," she cried, "just shout until the welkin rings. The Sea-cow always comes when the welkin rings."

"Who is the welkin?" asked Jenny, much puzzled. "I've heard of him."

"I don't know," replied the Moa; "but the Sea-cow always comes when he rings."

They thanked her and walked on. The sand was firmer, and a cool breeze had sprung up, which made walking pleasant.

"We had a narrow escape from that bird," said Walter. "She rushed at us just like a mad bull."

"It was awfully stupid of her to think we wanted eggs of that size," said Jenny; "but I say, Wally, what a strange creature the Sea-cow must be. Why should it be like a man at tea, any more than a man at breakfast or a man at dinner. What can be the difference?"

"It must be a very queer cow if it's like a man at all," said Walter.

They plodded on stoutly, though they were very tired and hungry. At last they came within hearing of the waves, and from the top of a gentle rise saw the sea, deep blue, with scarcely a ripple on it. They looked up the beach and down, but not a living creature could they see except the birds overhead.

"Oh dear," sighed Jenny, "what can have become of the Sea-cow?"

"She couldn't graze here," said Walter, looking round; "there's nothing but sand all round."

"Well, now we're here we may as well try and get the milk. Shout, Wally dear."

CHAPTER II

THE SEA-COW AND HIPPARION

CHAPTER II

THE SEA-COW AND HIPPARION

WALTER shouted again and again; and at last an odd-looking head peeped out of the water a little way from the shore. It was a very strange face indeed; the mouth seemed to be where the nose usually comes, and the cheeks were working steadily as the creature chewed a ribbon of seaweed. The face stared solemnly at them for a minute, and sank again.

"Shout more," said Jenny; "I'll shout too."

They called their loudest, and the face came up again.

"I'm *sure* the welkin rang that time," it said.

"You are not the Sea-cow!" exclaimed the children together.

"I'm always called so," said the creature mildly.

"The Moa said you were exactly like a man at tea," said Walter. "You're no more like a man than a whale is."

"The Manatee is my first cousin two and a half times removed," said the Sea-cow; "and he is very like me indeed. I'll come in closer and you'll see."

She came in quite near the beach, and then Walter saw their mistake. The Sea-cow was just like the strange creature called the Manatee which he had seen at the Brighton Aquarium.

"What can I do for you?" asked the Sea-cow kindly.

"The Moa said you would give us some milk," said Jenny doubtfully.

"So I will with pleasure if you'll wade out and get it. I can't come ashore, because I've got no legs. The whole herd is browsing close by, as it's nearly milking time. The Old Milkman of the Sea should come along very soon."

"Thank you," said Walter, a good deal disappointed; "but I think if I *did* wade out all the milk would be lost in the sea, and I haven't got a can or anything."

THE FACE CAME UP AGAIN

"I wish I could help you," said the Sea-cow; "but as you can't come in to me, and I can't come out to you, I'm afraid I can't give you any milk."

"When will the Old Milkman of the Sea come?" asked Jenny, hoping they might get a drink from him.

The Sea-cow's head sank, and in a moment popped up again streaming with water. "He's here now," it said, "and waiting. Good-bye," and it sank again.

"Well," said Jenny, as they watched the rings of wavelet spread where the Sea-cow had gone down, "that is a regular sell, as father says. What *are* we to do?"

Walter led the way to the crest of the low sandbank at the top of the beach and looked round. Behind them lay the waste of sand with its few palm-trees. On one hand the sand rolled away till it seemed to meet the sky; on the other, they could see a wood.

"Let's go to the wood," he said. "I don't think it's the one where we met the Stag; but we might find a brook there, and I am awfully thirsty."

Jenny was very thirsty too. She drew her arm through Walter's, and turning their faces towards the wood, the two started bravely. Never had they seen so lonely a place; there was not a boat on the sea; on the sand there was not a sign that a man had ever walked there. It was quite a treat to reach a little patch of thorn-bush where a few leafy trees gave shade.

"These look like fruit-trees," said Walter; "I'm going to see if I can't find something on them."

"Take care, Wally! The fruit may be poisonous, you know," said Jenny, who was a very sensible little girl.

"*That* doesn't look very poisonous, does it?" said Walter triumphantly. "Look at it; just like a little pineapple. It smells good, too."

"Perhaps they are pineapple-trees," suggested Jenny.

"I don't know; I'm not sure, but I don't think pineapples grow on trees, Jen; I'm going to taste this, anyhow."

He took a good bite and said, "Scrumptious!" holding it out to Jenny, who nibbled it cautiously at first, and ended by biting off a big bit.

"We shan't be thirsty after this," said Walter, the juice trickling from his mouth as he spoke. 'We'd better each take two and go on."

He crammed one into each pocket, and Jenny carried hers in her frock. They struggled through the bushes, and found themselves on the edge of a deep valley, with great masses of rock at the bottom.

"It's quite foggy on the other side," said Walter. "Shall we go across? We can come back if the fog is too thick to go on."

Jenny agreed, and they started to scramble down the bank, which was steep, and very slippery owing to the dryness of the short grass. They got tired of slipping, and at last slid and tumbled down anyhow. It was great fun, but they lost their fruits, and could not find them again among the rocks at the bottom. It was very hard work climbing up the other side, which was quite as steep and slippery; but when they got to the top they were surprised to find the sun shining brightly in a clear sky, while the side from which they had just come was hidden in dense mist.

"It must have floated right over," said Walter;

"but it's very funny we didn't notice it. Perhaps it passed while we were rolling down. Let's push through the bushes and see what's on the other side."

They forced their way through, getting a good many scratches, and came out on a flat meadow covered with waving grass; on the other side of the field there was a wood, which looked cool and pleasant. They were starting to cross the meadow when a snorting noise made them stop and look round.

"Look! there's—a—pony," said Jenny, who had not got back her breath after the climb up the bank. "What a funny little pony it is, too. Wally, did you *ever* see such a rough coat, and *such* an untidy tail?"

The pony, which was feeding just outside the wood, looked up from the grass as they came near, and blinked his eyes at them.

"I must go and pat him," said Jenny; "he is a dear little chap, and I'm sure he won't bite."

"Mind he doesn't kick," said Walter, who had seen one of Farmer Williams' horses kick the cart-man a few days before.

Jenny walked up to the pony with her hand out.

"Puss, puss, puss—I mean chick, chick: no——"

"What *do* you mean?" inquired the pony, swallowing the grass he was eating.

"I meant to say 'tck, tck,' you know," said Jenny. "Isn't that the proper way to speak to a horse?"

"It doesn't sound very polite," said the pony; "and anyhow, it's not the way to speak to *me*. I'm *not* a horse."

"I should say you were a pony," said Walter, looking him over.

"You shouldn't say anything of the kind," said the animal calmly; "I am not a pony. You came to speak to me," he added to Jenny; "what have you to say?"

"I was only going to pat you," said Jenny; "horses—nice horses—like being patted, and I thought you were a horse." She felt quite sure that the animal *was* a horse or a pony; but if he said he wasn't, it was no use insisting.

"I see no objection to being patted," said the animal, as if he were granting a great favour,

"though it isn't usual before one has been introduced."

There was an awkward pause. The pony did not seem inclined to introduce himself, and there was nobody there to do it for him.

"My name is Jenny, and this is my brother Walter," said Jenny presently. She hoped he would take the hint and tell them his name, but he only bowed gravely, first to her, and then to Walter.

"Please, what is your name?" asked Jenny, after another silence.

"Hipparion is my name."

"Hipparion," repeated Jenny, smiling.

"Quite right. You may pat me now if you like."

So Jenny patted him. Such clouds of dust flew out of his coat, that she had to stop and sneeze.

"They really ought to rub you down," said Walter, who had patted his neck.

"You have come many thousands of years to see me," said Hipparion, "and must take me as you find me. Besides, why should I be rubbed down?"

"Horses and ponies are always rubbed down," said Walter.

"Dear, dear, dear!" said Hipparion, looking annoyed; "I've told you I'm *not* a horse *nor* a pony. Look here—" he sat down and held

"HIPPARION IS MY NAME"

out his foreleg—"did you ever see a horse with a leg like that?"

"No, certainly not," said Walter at once.

Hipparion's leg was quite different from a horse's; it had one big hoof in the middle, and a smaller one on each side.

"What a funny leg!" said Jenny. "Why have you got legs like that?"

"Well," said Hipparion, "I have never really thought about it; but now you ask me, I find them very useful when I gallop through the soft, loose ground. My middle hoof would sink right in if it wasn't for the others. It's said in our family that my great-great-grandfathers had bigger side-hoofs than mine. Perhaps my greatest grandsons won't have any at all."

"I wonder if our horses *are* your great-grandsons?" said Walter. They have one big hoof on each leg—so far as one can see."

Hipparion looked interested. "I shouldn't wonder if you were right," he said; "very likely you are. But what are you doing down here in a world that's been dead thousands of years?"

He did not look at all dead; very much alive in fact, as he talked and whisked his tail.

"We came to go into the wood," said Jenny. "We went right through it and saw the Moa-bird on the sand when we came out on the other side; but I didn't like her very much."

"Well, she was nice to us afterwards," said Walter. "Do you know her?"

Hipparion shook his head slowly.

"I don't know what wood you mean," he said. "Did you cross a wide, deep valley on your way here?"

"Yes," said the children.

"Well, that's the Gulf of Ages," said Hipparion; "nobody on this side can cross to the other; it's about thirty thousand years across, and we on this side don't know anybody on the other side, nor anything about them. But, I say, do you know Bates?"

"No," answered Walter. "Who is he?"

"He's a friend of mine; that wood belongs to him. It just struck me that he must be a relation of yours."

"We haven't got any relations named Bates?" said Jenny, looking at her brother.

"No," said Walter.

"You are so like him," said Hipparion, sitting down again to look first at him and then at Jenny. "Bates walks on his hind-legs, and waves his arms about just like you; and he climbs trees, Bates does. You can climb trees, I suppose?"

"Walter climbs splendidly," said Jenny. "And I can climb too."

"And when you climb trees, you eat things you find on them?" said Hipparion.

"Rather!" answered Walter, thinking of the orchard.

"Then you may depend upon it, I'm right. I should say that Bates," he raised his fore-foot as if measuring the height of something—"I should say at a rough guess that Bates was your very great-uncle."

"All the better for me," said Walter; "to-morrow's my birthday."

"Wally! You think of nothing but tips," said Jenny severely.

"Of course you will go and see him?" said Hipparion; "I'll show you the way to his house if you like."

They were walking slowly towards the wood as they talked, and when Jenny said, "Oh yes, please do," Hipparion replied, "Come along," and dashed off among the trees at such a pace, that Walter had to stop him.

"Hi! we can't go as fast as that," he cried.

"Of course you can't if you go on your hind-legs. Why don't you swing along by your hands from bough to bough, like Bates?"

"I couldn't do such a thing!" cried Jenny; "I'm not a monkey!"

"Well, I never!" said Hipparion, sitting down suddenly and opening his eyes wide. "What next? If you are not monkeys, what are you? Just tell me that."

He seemed so positive about it, that Jenny was quite taken aback, and did not answer at once. Walter said, "Jenny is a girl, and I'm a boy," but Hipparion merely waved his hoof as if to say, "Wait till your opinion is asked."

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that nobody ever told you you were a monkey?"

"When we were very little children, and got into mischief, you know, and that sort of thing, Nurse used to call us young monkeys," said Jenny.

"Of course she did," said Hipparion, with a triumphant air. "She wouldn't call you *old* monkeys even now."

"Look here," said Walter, who was getting impatient, "you said you would show us the way to Mr. Bates' house."

"Come along," said Hipparion good-humouredly, getting up and shaking himself. "I'll

carry you both. Step on that tree-stump and get on my back, both of you. *That's* all right. Now hold on tight."

ONE OF HIPPARION'S TREMENDOUS JUMPS

Walter held on to Hipparion's mane, and Jenny, sitting behind, put her arms round Walter's waist. Hipparion looked round, and seeing they

were all right, set off at an easy gallop through the wood. Except when he made one of his tremendous jumps such as that in the picture, it was just like riding a rocking-horse, Jenny said, he went so smoothly.

CHAPTER III

HOLLOW-TREE HOUSE

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HOLLOW-TREE HOUSE

AFTER rather a long ride through the shade, they suddenly came out on an open glade, in the midst of which was a huge tree with a little fenced garden round it. Hipparion stopped at the gate, on which was painted in large letters—

MR. HY. LOW BATES,
HOLLOW-TREE HOUSE.

"Jump down," said Hipparion, speaking for the first time since they climbed upon his back. "This is Bates' house, but there doesn't seem to be any one about."

"I think I hear some one digging behind those shrubs," said Walter.

"You're right," said Hipparion. "It's the gardener. Hello there, McAcus!"

"Weel?" said a surly voice.

"Is your master at home?"

"Ay, he's at hame," replied the voice, and the sound of digging began again.

"Come and open the gate," called Hipparion sharply.

"Joost oppen ut tae yer'sel," answered the voice, and the spade clicked on pebbles once more.

"It's a Scotch gardener, like Lord Gatwick's," whispered Jenny.

"He's a very cross gardener anyhow," said Walter.

Hipparion, with his head over the gate, had been trying to reach the latch. Unable to undo it, he said in a loud voice, "Stand back please, chi'dr n, and I will kick it down in a minute."

There was the clatter of a spade flung down, and from behind the shrubs ran a very wrinkled old monkey, with shaggy brown hair all over him: he wore a Tam-o'-Shanter cap on the side of his head.

"Wull ye kick ut doon then?" he shouted angrily. "Wull ye?" Then seeing the party at the gate, he touched his cap and came forward grumbling to open it.

HE CAME FORWARD GRUMBLING

"Come awa in,' he said, "and gang up and knock on the door." He pronounced it "doo-er," just like Lord Gatwick's gardener.

"I don't see the door," said Walter, "or any house to have a door."

McAcus muttered something to himself, and led the way up the path to the great tree which looked as if it had been struck by lightning.

"Good-bye for the present," cried Hipparion from the gate; "give my love to your uncle and aunt."

"Yon's the hoose!" said McAcus, walking up to the tree-trunk and hitting it a very hard blow with his fist; "and yon's the door!"

"You will hurt yourself," cried Jenny, who was very tender-hearted, as she saw the gardener was about to hit the trunk another blow.

"I *hav* hurt ma'sel," said McAcus sadly but sternly, "but ut's ma duty."

"Well, wait a minute," said Jenny, "I think they heard your first knock."

McAcus drew off a step or two, sat down on the path, and sucked his knuckles. "It's

worruk," he said, taking his hand from his mouth to make the remark—"it's worruk, worruk, worruk, a' the day; a' day and every day. I'll need tae knock on yon door again. Ye'll see."

"Hush! I hear somebody calling inside," said Jenny. "Listen!"

The children listened, and could hear a voice, as it seemed, from far below the roots of the tree.

"Ann! Ann! why don't you shut the kitchen door and answer the front door, and tell that beggar to go away?"

McAcus chuckled gloomily, and muttered "Worruk, worruk."

"I suppose he means they have a great deal of work to do here," said Jenny.

"Just that," said McAcus.

There were squeaky footsteps inside the tree-trunk, and the children watched to see where the bark would open, when the sharp voice they had heard before spoke again, sounding much nearer than before—

"Ann! Just remember I am NOT AT HOME."

"I'll try and remember, ma'am," said a meek voice, and then the tree-trunk opened exactly where the gardener had knocked, and an elderly grey monkey, wearing a white starched cap and apron, stood in the doorway.

"Will you please ask Mr. Bates—" began Walter.

He was interrupted by a low, cooing scream from some one in the hall.

"My *dearest* children! So *glad* to see you! Do come in at once. Oh! Only supposing Ann had said 'Not at Home'!!"

"It's the Mistress," said Ann, "but she's Not at Home!"

Having said this she disappeared with a jerk as if somebody had pulled her from behind, and Mrs. Bates herself came forward. I must describe her for you. She was about as high as the dining-room table, with arms and hands so long, that by bending her knees the least bit she could put her knuckles on the ground. She was dressed in long black velvety wool. Her face was very like one of those indiarubber faces one finds on the crackers at Christmas; and it was fringed all round

with white hair: she had beautiful brown eyes, very round and bright.

"Come in!" she said, holding out both hands; "we have been wondering *when* you would come. Your great-uncle will be *charmed*. Come into the drawing-room and see him."

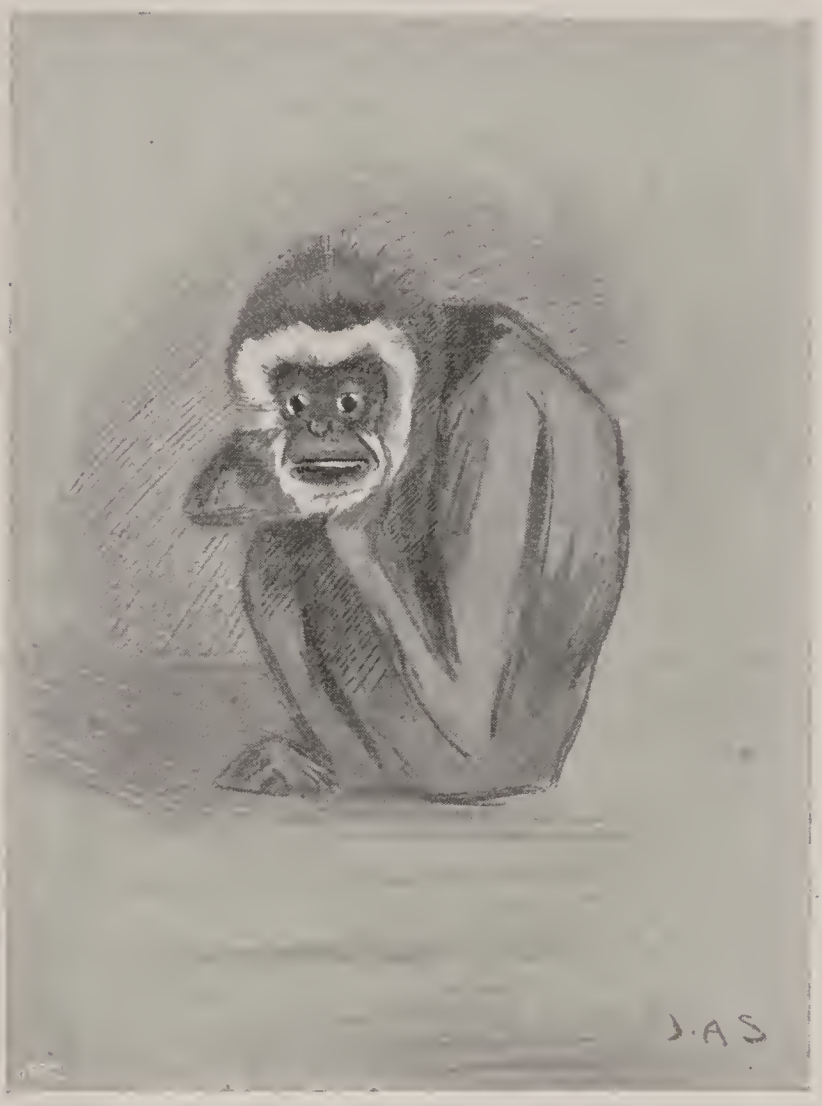
Walter and Jenny looked at each other in surprise, but followed Mrs. Bates in. It seemed absurd that a monkey hardly up to Jenny's elbow should be their great-aunt; but it was odd how Hipparion had said at once that Mrs. Bates was a relation of theirs, and Mrs. Bates had not only recognised them, but was expecting them!

They soon forgot to wonder about relationship, however, in their surprise at the house. It was a large tree outside; but how big, you could not guess until you got inside. Mrs. Bates led the way across the hall ("big enough to play badminton in," Walter thought) and into the drawing-room, where Mr. Bates sat on the floor thinking very hard about something. You will see how he did it if you look in the picture.

"My dear!" said Mrs. Bates, "what *do* you

think? Here are Jenny and Walter come to see us!"

Mr. Bates stopped thinking at once, got up,



MR. BATES THINKING VERY HARD

and came to meet them, smiling pleasantly. Except that he was a little bigger, he was exactly like his wife, black and woolly.

"I am delighted to see you," he said, giving his right hand to Walter and his left to Jenny.

"*Delighted!*" Then he changed hands, giving Jenny the right and Walter the left. "*Delighted!*" he said again.

"Sit down and rest yourselves, my dears," said Mrs. Bates. "You must be tired after such a *long* journey."

"It didn't seem so very far, thanks," said Jenny, taking the little chair Mrs. Bates offered; "and the pony—that is, Hipparion—brought us through the wood."

"*What* a long way!" exclaimed Mrs. Bates, throwing her eyes and arms to show how surprised she was. "Why, you must have come forty thousand years at least!"

"Quite fifty thousand," said Mr. Bates. "You came all the way from the Living World?" he added to Walter.

"From Lynn, in Norfolk," said Walter, not quite understanding what he meant by "the Living World."

"Then that's fully fifty thousand years from here."

"Not more than forty thousand, I *think*," said Mrs. Bates.

"Pardon me, my love, but it's quite fifty thousand," said Mr. Bates politely, but firmly.

"We must meet and argue the point if you insist," said Mrs. Bates in a warning tone.

"Yes, I suppose we must," sighed Mr. Bates. "We had better discuss it in the corner by the door as usual."

"Come!" said his wife, leading the way; "it must be settled."

Walter and Jenny could not see why the Bateses thought so much about the distance, nor why they said "years" instead of miles; and as they themselves were not invited to join in the Bateses' talk, they amused themselves by looking about the room. It was more like a greenhouse than a drawing-room. There were no pictures on the walls, which were decorated with bunches of leaves, clusters of strange nuts, and here and there a thick branch which stuck out from the wall. The oddest thing was, there were no windows; the light came from above; and when Jenny looked up, she saw there was no ceiling: you looked right up the hollow trunk

of the tree to a patch of sky at the top. Bushes and ferns grew inside this chimney and partly stopped it up.

"The tree must be hollow to the very top," Jenny whispered to Walter; "it is a queer house."

"I think it's rather a jolly one," said Walter. "I say, Jen, I think Mr. and Mrs. Bates are quarrelling."

It did seem rather like it: they were sitting on the floor, facing each other, waving their long arms, and shouting at the top of their voices. All at once they stopped, and Mr. Bates got up and handed his wife a palm-leaf fan, with a bow and a smile.

"He has such a courtly manner," murmured Mrs. Bates, fanning herself languidly.

"We have argued the point," said Mr. Bates, coming over to where Walter and Jenny sat watching them. "We have decided to agree that you have come forty-seven thousand five hundred and forty-nine years, eleven months, twenty-nine days, eleven hours, and four minutes to see us. Think of that! Isn't it wonderful?"

"The time—I mean distance?" asked Walter, much puzzled.

"The time *is* wonderful," said Mr. Bates; "but I asked if you did not think it wonderful that we decided the point so soon?"

"And with such an exact result," added Mrs. Bates.

"Was it so very difficult to agree?" asked Jenny, who didn't at all understand what the discussion had been about, but was glad their chattering was over.

"Very difficult," said Mr. Bates. He lowered his voice and added, "Why, it was a scientific question!"

"Really?" said Walter, beginning to think it must be important.

"Truly," said Mr. Bates. "You have just seen a scientific meeting between Mrs. Bates and myself."

"Come now," said Mrs. Bates, rising from the floor. "These dear children are tired, and they must want their tea. I will ring for Ann."

She took a bell made of half the shell of a cocoanut and a pebble, and rang it solemnly until Ann appeared and was told to bring tea.

"That is my parlour-maid," said Mrs. Bates as the door closed again. "She is honest, but so slow and so stupid—*and* so dirty."

"Can't you make her wash?" asked Jenny.

"I wouldn't ask her to wash," said Mrs. Bates. "It's not usual; but I do think she might *dust* herself sometimes: she never dusts anything else."

"What can be expected of a creature with such a name as Ann Thropithecus?" asked Mr. Bates.

"It's rather a difficult name to say, but she can't help it, I suppose," said Jenny; "it was given to her."

"You're not obliged to keep everything you are given, my dear," said Mrs. Bates. "If somebody gave you something you didn't want, what should you do with it?"

"Perhaps I should give it away, if the person who gave it didn't mind."

"Of course. Well, why doesn't Ann give away her surname?" asked Mrs. Bates. "I would give her a new one the same day."

At this moment the drawing-room door burst open with a crash, and a large tray, laden with

tea-things, flew in, followed by Ann, who pitched heavily among the cups and saucers on the floor. Mrs. Bates gave a faint scream ; Walter and Jenny ran to help Ann up and see if she were hurt.

"I tripped in my apron, ma'am," faltered Ann, receiving her cap from Jenny, and hastily putting it on back to front.

"You tripped in your *tail!*" cried Mrs. Bates, trembling with anger. "Haven't I told you over and over again that you *must* keep it coiled up in the house, as you will wear such a stupid, useless thing? How often have I trodden upon it for a punishment, I should like to know?" (Mr. and Mrs. Bates had no tails at all, and Ann's was only a false one.)

"Sic — six t — times, ma'am," sobbed Ann, wiping her eyes with her cap-strings.

"The very next time it happens," said Mrs. Bates severely, "I give you a month's warning. Put your cap on straight, and bring in another tray."

"Please, ma'am, I think there's some one at the front door," said Ann, putting her cap straight, and then sitting down to tie her tail in a loose fancy knot.

"Say 'The Mistress is not at Home,'" snapped Mrs. Bates.

The visitor, whoever it was, seemed very impatient. The knocking never ceased for a

"THE VERY NEXT TIME IT HAPPENS, I GIVE YOU A MONTH'S WARNING"

moment, and echoed louder and louder through the house till the door was opened. Then there was a shriek, a squeaky scuffle of feet (it was funny how Ann's bare feet squeaked,

just like a parlour-maid's new boots), and the next moment Ann appeared, this time on the top of the open door.

"Mr. Mackie Rodus," she announced, with a fearful glance down at the visitor who was coming in.

"NOT AT HOME!" screamed Mr. and Mrs. Bates in a breath, and with a bound and a swing the pair reached a bough high up on the wall, where they sat trembling in each other's arms.

"Save yourselves!" they cried to the two children, who were a good deal frightened. "Say you are not at home!"

But it was too late. Mr. Mackie Rodus was already in the room.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIGER

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THE TIGER

MR. MACKIE RODUS was an immense tiger, with long white tusks coming down on each side of his mouth like those of a walrus. He was sleek and fat, and his striped coat shone like satin as he walked in on his hind-legs, with his tail sticking up. He looked rather conceited; he was plainly very proud of his tusks, which he stroked as if they were moustaches.

"How d'e do?" he said, offering Jenny his paw and looking at her over his nose. "How d'e do, my little man?"

Walter did not like being called "my little man," even by a creature which stood quite seven feet high on his hind-legs. He said, "Quite well, thanks," but turned very red.

"And is my friend Mrs. Bates at home?" asked the Tiger.

"I think she is not able to see visitors to-day," replied Jenny, glancing up at the bough where Mr. and Mrs. Bates were perched.

"She didn't know it was I who called, I expect," said the Tiger, "or she wouldn't have said she was out. She likes to see me."

His back was turned to the wall, and when he said this Mr. and Mrs. Bates gave a little dart forward, making the most hideous faces at him without a sound.

"Now I wonder if I should find her up-stairs," said the Tiger. "I particularly want to see her this afternoon."

Mr. and Mrs. Bates drew back on their bough and climbed to a higher one, so softly, that not a leaf rustled.

"Can we give her any message?" asked Walter.

"Well, I wanted them both for supper." (Mr. and Mrs. Bates sprang two yards higher up the wall.) "That is, you know,—I was going to ask them to come to supper."

"I will tell them," said Walter. "When do you have supper?"

MR. MACKIE RODUS WALKED IN

"I have it when I'm hungry," said the Tiger; "ask them to come then."

Mr. and Mrs. Bates started off again, and did not stop till they were far up the chimney overhead.

"I've asked them to supper," said the Tiger in an injured tone, "over and over again; and they always promise faithfully to come, and they never do."

Walter and Jenny did not know what to say to this, so they waited for the Tiger to go on.

"I have *begged* them to come and stay at the Den—that's my house, you know—and said, 'Bring your own maid'" (there was a clatter on the open door, and Jenny glanced round in time to see Ann's cap-strings disappear over the top). "'You shall have home comforts, late dinner, cheerful society, and a Christmas-tree every Saturday night.' Could I do more?" he asked, appealing to Jenny.

"It was very kind of you, I'm sure," said Jenny.

"Yes, it was," agreed the Tiger; "*very*

kind. Come to supper to-night, you and your brother. It isn't Saturday, so there won't be any Christmas-tree; but you shall hang up your stockings instead."

"We are staying with Mrs. Bates, you see," said Jenny, who was very curious to see the Tiger's Den, and also wondered what she should find in her stocking. "She might be a little offended if we went out to supper on the very first day we came."

"Ah yes, so she might," said the Tiger; "but I'll tell you what; you go and ask her. Isn't *that* a happy thought?" He really seemed quite pleased with himself, for his eyes sparkled. "Trot along."

It was all very well for him to say "Trot along," just as if she had only to run upstairs; but Jenny saw, if the Tiger did not, that Mr. and Mrs. Bates had been climbing quietly higher and higher, until now only the shaking of leaves high up the chimney showed where they were.

"I think," said the Tiger, seeing that Jenny hesitated, "I'll just take a stroll in the garden while you go and ask Mrs. Bates."

"He thinks an awful lot of himself," said Walter, when the door had closed behind the Tiger. "He wouldn't be such a bad creature if he wasn't so stuck-up."

"I think he's rather amusing, though I'm sure he would be offended if he were told so," said Jenny. "But how in the world are we to ask Mrs. Bates if we may go to supper with him? Don't you see where they've got to?"

The two children stood in the middle of the room and stared up till they got crick in the neck. The Bateses must have been watching them, for a long arm was waved as they looked.

"Shout, Wally," said Jenny; "ask if we may go to supper at the Den."

So Walter shouted, and after a pause the answer came like the cooing of a dove in the chimney—

"Yes, do-o-o-o."

"And stay all night?" shouted Walter again, prompted by Jenny, who wanted to hang up her stocking.

"Yes, do-o-o-o!" came down like a soft echo.

"I expect they would let us do anything to get the Tiger out of the house," said Walter. "They are most awfully afraid of him."

When they came out they found the Tiger strolling up and down the garden path looking at the flower-beds. Now and then he stirred a bush with his paw, as if he were hunting for something.

"Shall I pick you a button-hole, Mr. Mackie Rodus?" asked Jenny, who was in high spirits: she forgot he had no button-hole in which to put a flower.

The Tiger did not answer; he went on poking among the bushes. Presently he said, "Could you lend me a gardener?"

"Well, really," said Jenny, taken aback—"perhaps Mr. Bates would lend you McAcus," she said, thinking that must be what he meant.

"Of course he would," said the Tiger quite briskly; "I didn't think of that. I know where McAcus is, and will go and borrow him."

"That's pretty cool, I must say," remarked Walter, as the Tiger strode round the tree-house. "If I were Mr. Bates I wouldn't stand it, I know."

They heard the Tiger roaring for McAcus, and presently there rose a terrible noise, which reminded them of the day when they found a hen in an empty corn-bin and tried to help it out with a rake and a broomstick.

"What can he be doing?" asked Jenny. "Let us go and see."

They ran round to the back, where there was a kitchen-garden and a tool-house. The Tiger was holding up a sack with both paws, and shaking something carefully down to the bottom of it. Having done this, he held the sack with one paw and spun it with the other till it was tightly twisted up, when he hung it carelessly over his arm.

"I have borrowed the gardener," he said; "it gave me some inconvenience, because he went and hid himself in the tool-house. I shall complain to Mr. Bates of his behaviour."

Inside the sack McAcus could be heard grumbling, "Worruk: worruk: worruk *a'* the day. An' whaurs ma bunnet?"

"I put his cap in with him," said the Tiger. "It must have got twisted up."

"I'm afraid he is very uncomfortable in

there," said Jenny, "he is screwed up so tightly."

"'A cheerful and contented mind,'" quoted the Tiger, "'can be happy *anywhere!*'"

"I don't think that means in a sack," said Jenny, who could not bear to see any one badly treated; "and I don't think, you know, that McAcus *has* got a very cheerful and contented mind."

"If he hasn't, he can't be happy anywhere, so it doesn't matter where he is," said the Tiger triumphantly, giving the sack another twist.

They turned out at the garden gate and went into the wood, the Tiger walking between them. The Den was not more than ten minutes' walk from Hollow-Tree House. It was a cave in the face of a cliff at the top of a mossy slope which began where the wood ended: the rocks were overgrown with yellow lichen, and wherever there was a crack or a cranny, flowers grew; pink and white blossoms, which made the cliff look like a great flower-bed standing on end. The only unpleasant thing about the place was the

quantity of bones. Big bones and little bones,

THE TIGER WALKING BETWEEN THEM

skulls and antlers, were scattered for yards and yards round the door of the cave.

"What splendid antlers," said Walter, pointing to a very large pair which had been set up against the rock.

"They belonged to one of my dearest friends," said the Tiger sadly. "What hunts we had together, he and I!"

"Did he get killed?" asked Walter, who was always interested in hunting: he used to hunt on a pony in the Christmas holidays, but that was fox-hunting. Hunting a stag with such antlers as those, he thought, must be even more exciting.

"Yes, he got killed," replied the Tiger; "but please do not ask me about it: it was very painful, particularly for him, poor dear fellow."

Of course Walter could not ask him anything more after that. There was only a narrow path through the heaps of bones outside the Den door, so he fell behind and followed Jenny and the Tiger in silence.

"This is the Den," said their host, waving his paw round. "Home comforts; well-aired beds; jam for tea—everything."

It was a beautiful cave. However careless

HE TURNED M'ACUS OUT ON THE FLOOR

the Tiger was about leaving bones outside, his house was so clean, you might have eaten your dinner off the floor. It was very well lighted, because there were two windows on either side of the door. These could not be seen from the outside because of the flowers; but once you were inside, the flowers helped to keep out the glare of the afternoon sun. In the middle of the cave was a smooth rock shaped like a huge mushroom, which made a perfect table; and the rock sofas and lounges were buried deep in soft dry grass and ferns, as springy to sit on as a new haycock.

"Why, all your chairs are rocking-chairs, Mr. Mackie Rodus," cried Jenny. "I do *love* rocking-chairs."

"Each was a rock to begin with," said the Tiger, "so it had only to be made a rocker —the simplest thing in the world. Pray sit down and make yourselves comfy while I call my servant."

He went to the door and shouted "Hi!" several times; but when nobody answered, he came in looking rather cross.

"Perhaps if you called your servant's name

he would come," said Jenny, who was rocking in the biggest chair.

"I *did* call his name," said the Tiger. "His name is Hi Enodon, and it suits him exactly, for he never has done anything when I ask him."

"Why not send McAcus to look for him?" said Jenny.

"That's a good idea," said the Tiger. He took the sack by the bottom corners and turned McAcus out on the floor. The gardener snorted, yawned, got up and shook himself.

"Weel?" he said, in a surly tone as he sat down and began to pull his Tam-o'-Shanter into shape. "Weel?"

"McAcus, will you please go and call Mr. Mackie Rodus' servant Hi?" said Jenny.

"It's nae duty o' mine to ca' him," said McAcus.

"It's your duty to obey me," said Jenny sharply, for his manner was very rude, and she would not allow rudeness from a monkey. "Go!"

"Worruk!" said McAcus; "worruk!"—his voice was choky—"wor-ruk!" He burst into

"IT'S NAE DUTY O' MINE TO CA' HIM"

tears and went, wiping his eyes on his Tam-o'-Shanter.

"I am sorry I hurt his feelings," said Jenny, "but he wouldn't go when I asked him nicely."

"I hope you haven't hurt his feelings," said the Tiger, "because then he won't come back, and then——"

He stopped suddenly, but Walter thought he heard him say something like "Hate a cold supper."

CHAPTER V

THE TIGER'S SUPPER PARTY

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VERY soon after McAcus went out of the cave Hi came in. Both Jenny and Walter took a dislike to Hi the minute they saw him. He was a mangy, shabby-looking hyæna, who looked as if he had just done something he was ashamed of and knew he should be found out. He did not trot boldly across the cave to reach the kitchen door: he shuffled all round the room, keeping close to the wall, looking at them out of the corners of his eyes.

HI SHUFFLED ALL ROUND THE ROOM

"Supper!" said the Tiger fiercely. "Venison and jelly, with cocoanut tart to follow. Did you ever taste cocoanut tart?" he asked Jenny in his purring voice.

"Cocoanut pudding we like very much," replied Jenny, "but I don't remember ever having cocoanut tart."

"You shall each have a very large piece to eat in bed," said the Tiger, with a smile. "When I was a little cub there was nothing I enjoyed so much as eating in bed"

"Thank you, that will be a treat," said Jenny politely.

"I have another treat in store for you," the Tiger went on. "I have asked my friend Mr. Sam O'Therium to come round and sing to us after supper. He is Irish, as you will know from his name, but he has travelled a great deal."

Meanwhile Hi was laying the table. There was one good thing about him—he was so quiet, and moved so silently, you would never have known he was in the room.

"Come along," said the Tiger, when Hi said supper was ready. "I hope there's lots to eat."

The venison was very good, and so was the tart. The only drawback was that the Tiger gave such enormous helpings: he gave each of the children a whole leg, and seemed quite hurt when they only ate one or two small slices. He ate a tremendous supper himself, finishing the deer, which was bigger than one of the sheep you see hanging in the butcher's, and then calling Hi to bring "another helping." His second help was only half a deer, it is true, but he ate every bit, and there was scarcely a scrap left when he had finished. The bones did not give him the least trouble; he cracked the biggest as easily as you do a bit of celery. He did not eat fast, but his mouth was always full; so there was not much talking till supper was over. He made Hi bring the tart for Jenny and Walter, while he had his second helping of venison.

"I didn't ask Sam to supper," he said, wiping his long tusks with his paws, "because he doesn't eat meat. He is a—a—a— What do you call a person who only eats greens and things?"

"I know; you mean a vegetarian," said

Walter. "The Curate at home is a vegetarian, and only eats fruit and vegetables."

THE BONES DID NOT GIVE HIM THE LEAST TROUBLE

"Just so," said the Tiger, with a beaming smile; "there's another reason why I didn't ask him: he is one of the great personages

about here; next to the Master Don, I suppose he is the greatest; but he is my special friend."

Mr. Sam O'Therium came round after supper, and then the children understood why his "greatness" prevented his coming to supper. He was so big he could not possibly get in at the cave door. If you look in the picture you will see what he was like. He took his own way through the bone-heaps outside, and you should have seen how he kicked them about.

"Good evening," he said, bending down his head to peep in, and speaking in a voice so deep it seemed to come from the bottom of a well. "I have come round to be introduced to your young friends."

The Tiger jumped up from the table and performed the ceremony of introduction with many bows, and flourishes of the paw. Then he proposed that they should go outside and sit on the bone-heaps to enjoy the cool evening.

"Hi shall take out something for us to sit on," he added, "as I don't want to dirty my coat."

Mr. Sam O'Therium laughed a long rumbling laugh; he was standing upright now, and it sounded like thunder just overhead.

"He is the best-dressed creature in this part of the country," he said to Jenny, "and takes *such* care of his clothes."

"Nonsense, Sam!" said the Tiger, evidently pleased, all the same. "Do sit down and make yourself comfortable."

Sam, who had been fidgeting about uneasily since the Tiger came out of the cave, just put down his head and said in a low voice, "Have you had dinner?"

"I have eaten all I want," replied the Tiger.

"On your honour?"

"On my honour," said the Tiger solemnly.

"Yes," said Sam, sitting down and speaking out loud once more, "Mackie Rodus is quite the best-dressed creature I know."

"I think his coat is lovely," said Jenny.

"It's a pretty good fit, I think," said the Tiger, getting up on pretence of stretching himself, but really to show off. "I'm sure the pattern is bad style, though: it's too loud."

"I like that bright yellow with a black stripe," said Jenny.

The Tiger raised his paw to hide a grin of pleasure, and turned round slowly to be admired.

THE TIGER GOT UP ON PRETENCE OF STRETCHING HIMSELF

"Where do you get your things, if it isn't a rude question?" asked Walter.

"A London man," answered the Tiger;

"I forget his name, but it's a very large shop in Cromwell Road."

"Do you *really* get your clothes in London?" asked both children together.

"It's the only place to get them," said the Tiger; "but I don't know that I can altogether recommend the Cromwell Road shop."

He sat down, drawing his tail through his paws, and went on: "Every one goes there; but they seem to think patterns that please creatures in the Living World must suit us, and also they are very troublesome when you want things in a hurry. They're careless, too; sometimes they send the wrong things, and then there's endless worry to get them taken back. Sam can tell you about *that*."

"Yes, indeed," said Sam. "I hadn't a thing to wear: was literally going about in my bones, and the Cromwell Road people said they'd make me a suit. After an age they sent it, and it was not the stuff I'd ordered at all; quite the wrong thing. I sent it back and refused to pay the bill. Do you suppose that answered? Not a bit of it. They kept the suit, and I heard nothing more for goodness

knows how long. When I made a row they sent word that the things couldn't be altered till they had held a meeting to talk the matter over; they were quite sure, they said, that the things were all right, but they would talk the matter over the next time they had a meeting, and let me know."

"And what did you do then?" asked Walter, very much interested.

"I wrote to them. I said, 'If you don't send me a suit I can wear, *at once*, I'll leave you, and take my custom to a tailor at Paris or Berlin.' *That* brought them to their senses."

"How very tiresome!" said Jenny.

"I think Hipparion was about the worst treated," said the Tiger. "He was in his bones too, as one may say. They sent him a suit from Cromwell Road; as sweet a thing as you'd wish to wear; beautifully cut, a perfect fit (I will say they always fit a fellow well), the very latest thing in style and pattern. Hipparion was delighted. He went peacocking about with his tail up, and swaggered like anything. Well, he hadn't worn the clothes

a week when down comes a message from London to say they find it was a mistake, and the clothes must be returned!"

"I wonder he sent them back," said Walter. "I wouldn't have done it."

"Do you know what would have happened if he had *not* sent them back?" inquired the Tiger, leaning forward, with a paw on each thigh.

Walter had to confess he didn't.

"Well, I'll tell you. They would have sent for Hipparion and said to him, 'We must take your measure again'—just an excuse, you know—and then they would have taken him to pieces and have shut up all his bones in glass cases."

Jenny gave a little cry when he said this, and clapped her hands.

"O Walter, the tailor's shop is the Natural History Museum! There are loads and loads of bones there in glass cases!"

The Tiger turned and stared at her till Jenny felt quite uncomfortable. After a minute's awful silence he said very stiffly—

"Now we will ask Sam to oblige us with a

song. Have you any excuses to make?" he added, turning to his friend.

"I have the usual supply," said Sam. "Shall I make them at once?"

"It would save time, perhaps," said the Tiger; "go on."

"I am a little hoarse," began the visitor pleadingly; "a little tired; I have a little headache; I have brought no music; I can't-sing - without - accompaniment - Ican'tplaymyown accompaniment." His voice had grown faster and faster, and now he poured out his words in a perfect whirl, so that you could not make out a thing he said. It was amusing at first; but he went on so long that Walter and Jenny stopped listening and sat gazing down into the wood where the moonlight showed great bats flitting to and fro. At last the guest stopped and laid his head on the ground, panting, for he was quite out of breath.

"He was cram full of excuses to-night," said the Tiger; "didn't you see them running down the hill like water as he poured them out?"

"I'm afraid I didn't notice it," said Jenny.

"That's a pity," said the Tiger. "A flood of excuses is a very interesting sight to see."

"The song I am going to sing to you," said Sam, raising his head and rising on his haunches, "is a little thing of my own."

"That will be very nice," murmured Jenny.

He waved his fore-leg to mark the time, and began in a high, thin voice, swaying his head at each line :—

"A straw of hay,
A nice ripe pea,
Is, an-ny day,
E nough for me.

I sip the dew
That falls at night :
A dain-tee thing,
My ap-pe-tite.

I do not love
The taste of meat ;
Give me a leaf,
So green and sweet."

"I'm so glad you like it," he said with a bashful titter, when the Tiger's roars of applause had died away. "It *is* a pretty little thing, is it not?" he added, to Jenny.

HE WAVED HIS FORE-LEG TO MARK THE TIME

"Very pretty indeed," answered Jenny politely; but she thought if Walter's white mouse could sing, that song would suit it better than this huge creature.

"There are several more verses," said Sam; but the Tiger, whom he addressed, did not seem to hear.

"It's bedtime," said that animal, yawning. "Come along in and I'll show you where you are to sleep."

They said "good night" to Sam, who stalked away down the slope, singing his little song to himself, and followed the Tiger in, through the front cave and under a very low door into another and larger cave at the back.

"It's nice and light, you see," he said. "I don't know how that great lantern came, but Hi lights it every night. Sleep well, and don't forget to hang up your stockings."

The lantern of which the Tiger spoke stood on the floor and threw a bright moon of light on a great sheet which was hung across the cave.

"Why, Walter, it's a magic lantern," said Jenny. "But I don't see where we are to sleep; do you?"

Walter did not answer; he had found a box of slides, and was busy looking for the place into which you slip the pictures. He had forgotten about bed and bedtime, for a magic lantern is such a capital plaything.

"Ha! I've got it. Get out of the way, Jen. There! it's upside down; wait a bit. *Now!*"

"It's only some stupid writing," said Jenny, looking at the sheet. "Pull that one out and put in another. Isn't there the picture of the horse that won't drink till everybody stops laughing, Wally?"

"Wait till I read the writing, Jen," said Walter; and he read aloud: "'*This is the only real magic lantern ever made: walk into the pictures, but come out before the light goes out.*'"

"Well!" said Jenny, "I wonder what that means."

"We'll try, anyhow," said Walter; and he pulled out that slide, and put in another. It was a picture of the desert, with Arabs and camels. "We won't go there to-night," said Jenny; and Walter put in another. This picture was quite different. Two little bedrooms,

side by side, with white curtains tied up with blue ribbons, and the very snuggest little bed you ever saw, in each!

"I bet that's what you want just now, Miss Jen," said Walter.

"But, Wally, they're only magic-lantern pictures."

"Well, you saw what the writing said. I'm going to try, anyhow."

He ran to the sheet, and it melted away as he touched it. He walked into one of the little bedrooms and jumped on the bed.

"O Wally, you *shouldn't* get on the bed with your boots on," cried Jenny.

"I expect that that is the most magic lantern ever made," said Walter; "come along into your room, Jen!"

"But, Wally, what will happen if we are in these little rooms when the lantern goes out?" asked Jenny, coming rather unwillingly, for she was a little bit afraid.

"I suppose we should go out with the pictures," said Walter; "wouldn't that be funny?"

"It would be *dreadful*," said Jenny, "and

I know I shall lie awake all night thinking about it."

Whether it was because she slept in a magic bed, or because she was very tired after such an exciting day, I don't know; but no sooner was her head on the pillow than she was fast asleep.

CHAPTER VI

THE MASTER DON

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THE MASTER DON

A TREMENDOUS banging on the door woke the children next morning. Usually they were not very good about getting up when they were called; but as soon as Jenny opened her eyes she saw that the light of the magic lantern was growing dim, so she sprang up at once and cried to Walter to make haste. Every minute the light and the furniture became fainter and fainter; the bed had almost vanished when she had finished dressing, and the washstand was quite gone.

"We are just in time, Walter," she said, as they turned at the door which led to the front cave to look back; "another minute, and where should we have been?"

The last flicker of light died out as she spoke, and where those two nice little bedrooms had been was darkness as black as the cellar.

"Good morning," said the Tiger, whom they found sitting at the table sharpening his claws. "You were up just in time this morning. I've been out of bed for at least two hours and have done my hunt — I mean shopping. Did you hang up your stockings last night?"

Walter and Jenny had dressed in such a hurry that they had not had time to feel disappointed when they found the stockings they had hung up empty.

"Yes, but only for a joke, you know, Mr. Mackie Rodus. We didn't expect presents, of course," said Walter.

"Of course not," said Jenny, but rather faintly.

"Do you mean to say you found nothing in them this morning?" asked the Tiger.

"Nothing at all," laughed Walter.

"That's very odd," said the Tiger thoughtfully, "very odd. I never knew such a thing happen before. Perhaps there was a hole in your stocking—Eh?"

"Yes there was a big one in the heel," said Walter; "but it doesn't matter a bit, you know."

"It *does* matter," said the Tiger, so sharply that the children jumped. "I've told you, Master Walter, over and over and over again—" here the Tiger ran into the back cave—"over and over *again*, that holes must be mended as soon as they come! Come this very minute and change them!" he cried shrilly.

"How exactly like Nurse scolding!" said Jenny in a whisper. "His voice is just like Nurse's, and that's just what she would say, too."

"Yes," said Walter, very much puzzled. "But I may as well go and see."

"No!" pleaded Jenny, clinging to his arm. "If it is Nurse, she would make me go home, and I don't want to. Let's run away and play in the wood until it's time to go back to Hollow-Tree House."

They stole quietly out of the cave, picked their way carefully through the bones, and raced down the slope into the wood. When they got out of sight of the cave among the trees they paused to listen, and could hear the Tiger calling "Hi" in his own roaring voice, which was not a bit like Nurse's.

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"It's a most funny thing," said Jenny as the Tiger called again and again. "I really did think it was Nurse when he began to scold."

"I'll tell you what *I* think," said Walter. "I don't believe he ever put any presents in our stockings, and pretended that he did and the things fell out through the holes."

"And scolded like Nurse to make us think it was our fault?" said Jenny.

"Yes," said Walter. "It was rather mean of him, I think."

It was cool and pleasant in the shady wood, and the children chased each other and played hide-and-seek until they were tired out, and had wandered so far from the Den that they could not have found their way back if they wished.

"It does not matter," said Walter, "we will sit down here and rest, and then ask the first creature we meet to tell us the way to Hollow-Tree House. It will be all right if we get back there in time for dinner."

"Listen!" said Jenny after a long silence. "What's that noise?"

Walter stopped drumming with his heels

on the ground and listened; the noise was a great rustling and heavy thuds as if a giant were shaking giant apples from a giant tree.

"Let's go and see," he said; "it doesn't seem to be very far away."

A short walk brought them out of the wood to a place where there were only low bushes and a few palm-trees; they could see cocoanuts hanging in huge green clusters under the feathery tops. One palm was being violently shaken, and in another moment Jenny said—

"Why, it's a tremendous great Elephant, Wally!"

"He is shaking down the cocoanuts," said Walter. "Let's go and ask him for one."

The Elephant, who wore a college cap and large gold-rimmed spectacles, stared a little when he saw the two children, and after a moment put out his trunk.

"I'm very sorry," said Jenny, "but I haven't got a bun for you."

"I don't know what you mean," said the Elephant in a big deep voice, and drew his trunk back. "What do you want?"

His manner was so stiff that neither Walter

nor Jenny liked to ask for a cocoanut, though there were dozens and dozens of the great green globes lying on the ground; but it seemed stupid to say "nothing" and go back into the wood, so Walter said—

"Please, do you know the way to Hollow-Tree House?"

"Yes," said the Elephant, toying with a cocoanut.

"Then will you kindly tell us which way to go," said Walter.

"Well," said the Elephant, "I'd rather not: these are the holidays, and it's my rule not to teach anybody anything in the holidays. Come back in a month and I'll tell you anything you like."

"We only want you to tell us the way," said Jenny, "not to teach us anything."

"Teaching *is* telling," said the Elephant, "and telling is teaching. *You* wouldn't like it if they asked you to learn things in the holidays?"

"No, certainly we shouldn't," said Walter.

"Of course not; well, I don't like teaching things in the holidays."

"I suppose, sir, you are a master," said Jenny respectfully. She thought perhaps if he could be got into a good temper he would tell them the way; so they wouldn't go just yet.

"I AM THE MASTER DON"

"Yes," replied the Elephant. "I am the Master Don."

"What is a Master Don, please?" asked Jenny.

Evidently the Elephant did not mind telling some things during his holidays. He bowled his cocoanut into the bushes and sat down on his haunches, facing them.

"You know what a master is?" he said.

"Yes, of course," said the children.

"And perhaps you've heard of a Don?"

"They call the Masters at Oxford 'Dons,' don't they?" said Walter.

"They do," said the Elephant. "I teach; but I am far too great a person to be called either one or the other. I am four yards high; so I am called both. I am the Master Don."

Walter took off his hat and Jenny made a curtsey; the Master Don gave two quaint little bows, and a quaint little smile with each.

"You are on a visit here, I suppose?" he said. His manner was quite changed now; very kind, if a little condescending.

"We are staying with Mr. and Mrs. Bates," said Walter. "At least we spent yesterday there and went to supper and to sleep at the Tiger's Den. We were going back to Hollow-Tree House now."

"Ah! You are staying with Bates, are you? I taught him when he was a lad. What a clever fellow he was! I kept school under an oak-tree then; Bates was at the top of the school every day; *every* day. You simply could not keep him down. I might give him any bush I chose and he would know all about it as soon as he had turned over the leaves.'

"That sounds very clever," said Walter.

"He comes of a clever family," said the Master Don. "Mackie Rodus was at my school, too. I was proud of Mackie Rodus, and fond of him. He was a perfect cub."

This looks rather contradictory; but, if you think of it, there is a difference between "a perfect *cub*" and "a *perfect* cub."

"He was always trying to get up to Bates," continued the Master Don, "but Bates was too quick: nobody could ever catch him up. He is a fine creature, Mackie Rodus, but I am afraid he has not many friends nowadays. I think that I myself am the only creature for whom he has any real respect."

"Why does he lose his friends?" asked Jenny. "Isn't he nice to them?"

"He meets them out hunting," sighed the Master Don, "and then they get killed. His friends would be only too glad if he *did* lose them; what they don't like is his finding them."

He took up a cocoanut in his trunk and thumped his head with it thoughtfully. After one or two thumps it broke, and the milk bubbled out and streamed over his head.

"Most refreshing," he said as he put the broken husk into his mouth; "very pleasant on a warm day like this. May I do the same for you?" he asked politely, picking up another cocoanut and holding it over Jenny's head.

"Thanks very much, but I'd rather you didn't," said Jenny, hurriedly stepping back. "If you would kindly open it, so that we could drink the milk, we should be so grateful."

The Master Don gave the cocoanut one tap on the end of his sharp tusk and handed it, with a neat round hole punched in the middle, to Jenny.

"Now, if you will excuse me," he said, "I will go to sleep."

"Certainly," said Walter. "I hope we have not been keeping you awake all this time. Do you always sleep in the middle of the day?"

"In the holidays I do," said the Master Don.

HE TOOK UP A COCOANUT AND THUMPED HIS HEAD WITH IT

"I begin to sleep each day about noon, and finish about sunrise in the morning."

"What a long sleep!" exclaimed Jenny.

"I sleep very slowly," said the Master Don.

"I don't quite understand."

"Well, when you are *very* tired and go to bed, what do you do?"

"I go fast asleep," said Jenny.

"Just so. Well, as I am not at all tired in the holidays, I go slow asleep; so it takes a long time. Now you understand."

He got up heavily, and, leaning against a stout palm-tree, began to snore, paying no attention to the cocoanuts which came tumbling down upon him from the shock.

"You haven't told us the way to Hollow-Tree House yet, please," cried Walter.

"Oh no; no more I have," said the Master Don, without opening his eyes.

"Well, won't you *please* tell us, and we won't bother you any more?"

"Yes, yes," answered the Master Don sleepily. "Go up to the very top of that tall tree over there, turn to the right and keep straight on."

"Does he think we are monkeys?" asked Jenny in despair.

The Master Don was now sound asleep his snores shook the earth, and every snore brought down a shower of cocoanuts, so that

EVERY SNORE BROUGHT DOWN A SHOWER OF COCOANUTS

the children had to walk farther away for fear of being hurt.

"Come along, Jen," said Walter, turning away, "we must go and look for some other creature who will tell us the way. We shall

find it somehow. Don't cry, dear," for Jenny was beginning to sob a little.

They walked towards the tall tree to which the Elephant had pointed with his trunk, Walter with his arm round his sister to comfort her. Suddenly Jenny choked down her sobs and broke from his arm, clapping her hands. "O Wally, how silly we are! The Master Don said, 'Go to the top of the tree and turn to the right.' Well, if we just go to the *foot* of the tree and turn to the right we shall go the same way, shan't we?"

"Why, of course!" exclaimed Walter. "I never thought of that. It *was* stupid."

They reached the foot of the tree, and sure enough, when they had walked for only two minutes to the right, they saw the garden gate of Hollow-Tree House.

CHAPTER VII

BY TRAIN TO 50,000 YEARS AGO

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BY TRAIN TO 50,000 YEARS AGO

THEY found Mrs. Bates enjoying a sun-bath on the garden path. When she saw them she sat up, and after staring for a minute said, "Why, you have come back alive!"

"Did you expect us to come back dead?" laughed Walter.

"Certainly, if you came back at all," said Mrs. Bates in an offended tone. "It's extremely awkward, I must say."

"Why?" asked Jenny, who was a good deal surprised at her manner.

"*Why!* Because we called a scientific meeting last night to discuss your fate, and decided —that Mackie Rodus would kill you both; that he would eat you both; and that therefore neither of you would return alive."

"Well, you see we have returned alive," said Walter, "and rather hungry."

"That's just what annoys me so," said Mrs. Bates. "We may be behind the times—we *are* behind *your* times—but we do respect the decisions of science. It has been decided at a scientific meeting that you are dead. What is to be done?"

"Hold another, and decide we're not," suggested Walter.

"Of *course!*" cried Mrs. Bates, looking quite pleased. "What could be more scientific than to decide that what was proved right yesterday is wrong to-day? We'll hold a meeting this minute."

She ran into the house and called Mr. Bates, who answered from the chimney, where he had gone when he heard the garden gate slam. They began the meeting at once; the children could tell that by the storm of chattering, but their voices were so high that it was plain some difficulty had arisen. Presently Mr. Bates came to the door and asked very earnestly—

"Can you give any scientific reason why Mackie Rodus did not eat you?"

"I expect he had something he liked better," said Walter, rather impatiently.

Mr. Bates considered this reason for some minutes, resting a hand on each door-post; then nodding his head gravely he went in again.

"I wish they would be quick," said Jenny; "I want my dinner."

There was a little more chattering and then calls for Ann and McAcus. After a long silence a sudden burst of cheering and clapping rose, and Mr. and Mrs. Bates came running out with their arms in the air, radiant with smiles of welcome.

"Come in, come in, dears!" they cried. "We never never dared hope to see you alive again. Oh, what a *won*-derful escape you *have* had! Come along in to dinner at once."

"You are quite sure now we are alive?" said Jenny mischievously.

"Oh, quite," answered Mrs. Bates as they went into the house. "I am very sorry we were so long over the meeting. To tell you the truth, the matter was a very weighty one: it was all Mr. Bates could do to move the resolution, and we had to get Ann and McAcus to help before we could carry it."

While the children ate their dinner they had to tell Mr. and Mrs. Bates about their visit to Mr. Mackie Rodus. It had never seemed to them while at the Den that they were in any danger, but what they heard now made Jenny at least declare she would never go near the Tiger or his house again.

"Belonged to a dear friend of his!" said Mr. Bates when Walter told him about those splendid antlers; "a friend who got killed out hunting! My dear, Mackie Rodus with his own teeth and claws killed the owner of those antlers: those bones outside his cave are *all* the bones of creatures he has killed."

"What a horrible brute!" said Walter.

"Just to mention a very few of my own acquaintances," continued Mr. Bates, "a very few who have been killed quite recently. There was a brother-in-law of Hipparion; as nice a creature as ever you met in your life. Mackie Rodus asked him to go and taste the grass among the rocks near the Den, then lay in wait and sprang out and killed him the moment he came."

"Then he is a sneak," said Walter.

"He is. A day or two after he killed McAcus's aunt, a poor old body who wouldn't hurt a kitten. Mackie Rodus came upon her drinking at the stream one evening and bit her head off."

"What a fearful savage!" said Walter.

"Yes; and then he went and said he did it in fun! The fact is his character is so bad that only really great people can have anything to do with him; and even they fight rather shy of him."

"I heard him tell Mr. Sam O'Therium last night that he had had dinner, so Mr. Sam might feel safe," said Walter. "I didn't know exactly what he meant, but of course I see now."

"You must never go near him again," said Mrs. Bates, forgetting how she had urged them to go to supper and stay the night. "What *I* can't understand is why you didn't follow us up the wall when he came yesterday: we expected you to come the moment we shouted 'Not at home.'"

"We didn't come because we couldn't," said Walter. He was a good climber, but it was

absurd to suppose that he, to say nothing of Jenny, could have followed the Bateses up the wall.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Bates, "that you don't practise your gymnastics."

"I don't practise regularly," Walter confessed, "because there is only a swing and a pair of rings at home; but I'm awfully fond of doing gymnastics. I can walk on the parallel bars and hang by my knees."

"That's very good as far as it goes," said Mr. Bates; "but young people don't seem to be what they were in my time. When I was a mere child I could swing from one end of the wood to the other and back again by my hands. The Master Don was very strict with us; we were not allowed to move up in the school at all until we had passed in gymnastics."

"Did you have an exam. in gymnastics?" asked Walter eagerly. "*You* must have got good marks for it, I should think."

"I never got any marks myself," said Mr. Bates; "but then I was naturally good at it. I remember that a cousin of Ann Thropithecus,

a day scholar, did so badly that the Master Don put him over his tusk and whipped him severely; he kept the marks for days."

"It was a different kind of marks I meant," said Walter.

"We only knew one kind," said Mr. Bates; "but things have changed since I was at school. Whatever the new way of marking may be doesn't matter a bit. What I say is, that there is nothing so important to our family as gymnastics, and I wouldn't allow any child of mine to go out in the world to find his living till he had passed. I shouldn't care if he knew every leaf in the forest by heart; he could never get on in life unless he was good at gymnastics."

"I am sure Mackie Rodus would have killed us both over and over again if we had not been at home on any bough in the forest," said Mrs. Bates. "Gymnastics first, *I* say," and she looked very hard at Jenny.

"Ought I to learn gymnastics as well as Walter?" asked Jenny.

"*Don't* you learn?" asked Mr. and Mrs. Bates in shocked tones.

"I—I'm very fond of climbing trees," said Jenny, who only confessed this to people she knew very well indeed.

"Of course you are: you would not be like your family if you were not. What would your mamma say if you couldn't follow her up a tree and swing from branch to branch?"

Both Jenny and Walter burst out laughing. The idea of Mother, dear stout Mother scrambling up a tree and swinging by her hands like the Bateses was so funny they couldn't help it; they laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks.

"Well?" said Mrs. Bates. "What is so amusing?"

"*Mother* doesn't climb trees!" crowed Walter. "Oh my! Think of Mummy climbing a tree!" and he and Jenny went off into another fit.

"Then your mother is not an ape," said Mrs. Bates, in the tone she might have said "She is not nice."

"No, certainly she isn't," cried both children.

"Then you are not apes either," said Mrs. Bates, in a voice which meant "You can't possibly be respectable."

"Of course we're not," said Walter.

Mr. and Mrs. Bates sat back and looked at one another gloomily.

"We have been deceived by the ex-tra-or-din-ary likeness," said Mr. Bates at last. He

MR. MACKIE RODUS WAS AT THE GATE

looked from Jenny to his wife, and back again. Jenny made a little face.

At this moment a tremendous roar was heard outside, and Ann fell into the room crying that Mr. Mackie Rodus was at the gate. Mr. and Mrs. Bates nearly fell off

their chairs, and their faces turned from the colour of india-rubber to a dusky yellow.

"If the Tiger roars again," said Walter, "it will frighten them into the middle of next week."

Mrs. Bates heard him, and sprang up eagerly.

"No!" she cried, "not the middle of next week. Let's go back to the middle of last: we were safe then, and one never knows what may happen."

A curious giddy feeling came over Walter; he felt Jenny clinging to his arm, and heard Mr. and Mrs. Bates chattering beside him. The room began to spin slowly round, and as it spun it grew larger and darker, and the roof filled with fog. The voice of Mrs. Bates sounded small and thin, like a cat mewing in a railway station. Then there was a rush of air, a rattle and a roar, and a big voice shouted: "This way to the trains for next week and up-line stations; to the left for last week and down!" A crowd of strange animals swept them along towards the train for last week. Dimly Walter saw the Master Don,

A CROWD OF STRANGE ANIMALS SWEPT THEM ALONG

Sam, a stag with great spreading horns, and a perfect host of creatures he had not seen before; the girders above were thronged with monkeys, and he caught a glimpse of Ann with flying cap-strings, and McAcus in his Tam-o'-Shanter.

"Take your seats, pleeease!" and somehow Walter found himself in a carriage alone with Jenny.

"Are we all right for last week?" cried Walter to an old monkey who looked in as he passed.

"Right away!" shouted the old monkey. "It's the Express, and doesn't stop for fifty thousand years. No more passengers! *Right!*-away."

Every creature on the platform blew a whistle, and the train shot out of the station as though it had been fired from a gun.

"What a long tunnel it is," said Walter after a minute: the train was flying along so fast that it seemed not to touch the rails, and so smoothly that the windows didn't even rattle.

"I should think it was the Underground

Railway in London," said Jenny, "only it's faster, and not so noisy and dirty. You remember going in the Underground that day we went with father to the Museum, Wally?"

"I wonder how long it will be before we get there?" said Walter. "Mr. Bates said we had come forty-seven thousand years and more to see them; and we walked and rode Hipparion; and *that* didn't take long. We ought to arrive soon, I expect."

As he spoke the train began to move more slowly; the darkness became sunshine, and looking out of the window the children saw it was passing through what seemed to be a park, only the trees were different from those they knew best. Then the motion stopped altogether and the children found themselves seated on a bank, with no sign of a train or a railway left except a faint cloud of smoke floating off overhead.

CHAPTER VIII

TOMMY THERIUM AND BRONTOPS

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"CONSIDERING that we hadn't any tickets," said Jenny, dreamily watching the last wreath of smoke melt away in the air, "or any money except a shilling and some pennies, it's lucky we got out of the train like this; but the luggage has gone on."

"Wake up, Jen!" laughed Walter; "we hadn't any luggage at all."

Jenny started and drew a long breath. "Oh, no more we had," she said. "But, Wally, I wonder what the name of this place is. I think it's prettier than the last country, but it's very smothery-feeling."

"It reminds me of Lord Gatwick's big conserv't'ry," said Walter. "Look at the trees and things."

"Perhaps we're in India," suggested Jenny.

"It's rather like the pictures of India—or South America."

"We couldn't go by train to India or America, Jen, you silly. I vote we go and look for some creature who can tell us where we are."

Jenny agreed, and they strolled away, wandering in and out among clumps and patches of great ferns and creepers. There were no animals to be seen about; but crossing a bit of soft ground they saw deep footmarks such as an elephant might leave.

"There's something up there in that tree," said Walter. "We'll go and see what it is."

The something was a pretty little animal rather like a monkey, but with short legs and a head more like that of a squirrel than an ape. When it saw the children it sat up on its hind legs and stared down at them with its paws held like a begging dog.

"Guess you're strangers here?" it said in a friendly tone.

"Yes, we are," began Walter. "We only arrived about half-an-hour ago, I should think."

"And where did you come from?"

"A place fifty thousand years from here," said Jenny, as Walter hesitated; "and please can you tell us what this place is?"

The little animal opened its eyes wide. "You mean to say you don't know where you are?"

"We haven't the least idea," said Jenny.

"Wal, where did you book to before you got on the cars? Where did you take tickets for?"

"We didn't take tickets for anywhere."

"Wal, if you didn't take tickets for anywhere, you wouldn't expect to be set down anywhere, would you?"

"But we *were* set down," said Walter.

"Of course you were, or you wouldn't be here. This isn't anywhere that I know of. Now you understand?"

"I don't understand a bit," said Walter.

"I'll try and make it clearer for you," said the little creature, jumping lightly on to a lower bough and sitting up again. "Now you'll hear me better." It raised its fore-paws, and told off the points on its long fingers one by one.

"If you didn't book to anywhere you wouldn't get to anywhere, because not anywhere is nowhere, and nowhere is where you would get to, not having taken tickets to anywhere; and this, as I said before, not being anywhere, it's nowhere, and so you came hither, that is nowhere, whither you booked. I think *that's* plain."

"*I* don't," said Walter; then, feeling that this was rude, he added: "But I am very much obliged to you all the same."

"Look here," said the little animal, jumping down to a bough on a level with Walter's face, "I'll try and make it still clearer——"

"Oh *please* don't trouble," said both children together. "It's very kind indeed of you; but you really mustn't trouble."

"It's no trouble, I assure you. I do all the explaining for the folks down here."

"Do you really?" said Jenny, thinking what a dreadful muddle the folks down here must get into.

"I do really. I do all his thinking for Brontops."

"Who is Brontops?" asked Walter.

"He is one of the greatest people in these parts. I am his Head Secretary. He can't

"I DO ALL THE EXPLAINING FOR THE FOLKS DOWN HERE"

do without me; gets into an awful mess if I leave him for a single day."

"Then he must be in a mess now," said Jenny.

"I guess he is. He wanted me to work out of hours without extra wages; so I left him to see how he could get on without me."

"What did he want you to do?" asked Walter.

"He asked me if I didn't think it was cold last night—as if one could stay up all night to think if it were cold or not!"

"I don't think one need sit up all night to know *that*," said Jenny.

"You must if you mean to do your work properly," said the little animal, with a knowing air.

"Have you resigned your situation then?" asked Walter.

"I resign it about twice a week on the average. Brontops always asks me to come back."

"You'd better take care he doesn't get a new Head Secretary," said Jenny.

"There's no fear of that. Indeed I find the only way to keep the situation is to resign it very often. I made up some poetry about that."

"Did you?" asked Jenny.

"I will repeat it to you; then we will go and enjoy ourselves. I know exactly where to look for Brontops."

"Is that the way you enjoy yourself?" asked Jenny.

"Yes, always when I've resigned. We're sure to find him in the most *awful* mess."

Jenny thought he was rather a spiteful little creature, although he had been so polite to them; but it was not her business to tell him that, so she waited for him to repeat his poetry. Here it is:—

"Though Brontops is so very large and strong,
He never thinks, because to think would weary 'um;
It's well to leave him sometimes to go wrong,
For then he values little Tommy Therium."

"You are Tommy Therium?" said Walter.

"I am. But there's another verse, even better than that."

"It must be very clever then," said Jenny.

"You're right! I believe you'd like to hear it?"

The children said they should like to hear it very much, so Tommy drew himself up

and repeated it, marking all the important words with a wave of his paw.

"In all the land there's no one really nice,
From Squalodon to Microsyops, my brother,
But asks for Tommy Therium's advice,
Sees that he gets it, and will take no other."

"That is *very* good," said Jenny.

"Yes. When I have an idea I am going to make up another verse."

"Who is Squalodon?" asked Walter.

"He is very like a whale," replied Tommy. "I don't see much of him because he lives in the sea a good long way from here. Microsyops isn't really my brother: he's my cousin. He's most awfully proud because I put him in as my brother; didn't see, you know, that 'cousin' wouldn't rhyme with 'other,' so that I *had* to do it."

He stooped, picked something out of the bark at his feet, and ate it thoughtfully. Then he jumped off the bough, gave himself a shake, and said, "Come along; we'll go and look for old Brontops. You shall each hold one of my hands if you are good"

He took his place between them, took a

hand of each, and throwing himself forward, said, "Let's run!" The children, to please him, ran as fast as they could, and Tommy, resting all his weight on their hands, jumped

TOMMY RESTING ALL HIS WEIGHT ON THEIR HANDS

along with great strides, chuckling with delight. At last he lifted his feet from the ground so that they carried him, when he looked up in their faces, shouting with laughter.

"What a baby you are!" said Jenny as they stopped running.

"I am very light-hearted when I have resigned," said Tommy. "Whoa! Stop!"

"What is it?" asked Walter.

"You see that?" said the cheerful little creature, withdrawing his hand from Walter's and pointing to great deep footmarks on the ground. "Brontops made these footsteps. Brontops, you see, has already taken steps to get me back."

"But they go in quite the wrong direction," said Jenny; "the toe-marks show he was going away from your tree, not towards it."

"That's why I know he took those steps to get me back," said Tommy; "told you he always went wrong when I am not by to think for him. STOP!!" He drew his hand from Jenny's, pressed his forehead, and sank down on his haunches.

"What *is* the matter?" asked Jenny.

Tommy did not answer; he kept one hand to his brow, and shook the other at her while he rocked to and fro, seeming in great pain.

"It's coming!" he said at last. "I feel it

boiling and bubbling and rising and—here it is! Here it is!! Hold my hand, please! *Now*—

"You never want the thing you've always got—
The thing you want is what you cannot get;
Not till you lose the thing you wanted not,
It proves the thing on which your heart was set."

"That's Brontops thinking of his lost Secretary; but it will do for many other things. Do you ever make poetry?" he added to Jenny; his eyes were still rolling wildly.

"No, never," answered Jenny.

"Then you don't know how dreadful it is to feel you *must* make poetry when you haven't an idea what to make it of."

"I shouldn't try, I think," said Jenny.

"But you *should* try: 'try, try again,' you know."

"Suppose we go and look for Mr. Brontops," said Walter, who thought that Tommy talked a great deal of nonsense.

The little creature was certainly very good-tempered; the moment Walter spoke, he stopped and led the way along the foot-prints. They had not gone far when Tommy paused and pointed to something in front.

"Now what should you say that was?" he asked.

He pointed to something which looked like a heap of mud in the long grass; but when you looked carefully you saw a pig-like tail fidgeting at one end, and could make out the shape of an animal: a rhinoceros, or something of that kind. Walter looked for a minute or two, and said it was a rhinoceros which had been buried in mud and dug up again.

"You're nearly right," said Tommy. "That's Brontops. Didn't I tell you he got into a mess when I resigned? and did you ever in all your *life* see any creature in such a fearful mess? He's been wallowing in mud, you know; that's what he always does: wallows in mud all day, and comes home in such a state that I think he must go and bathe in the river."

"And does he always go?" asked Jenny.

"Usually," answered Tommy. "He *almost* always does what I think he ought to. Come and I will introduce you both, and then you ought to go and call at the Lair; that's where Brontops lives."

"I should be very pleased indeed," said Jenny; "but do you think Mr. Brontops would like us to see him in that state? I didn't understand that you meant he got into a muddy mess, and really and truly, you know, he's dreadfully dirty."

"I think he ought to have a bath at once," said Tommy briskly. "You sit down here and wait."

They sat down, while the little creature went to Brontops and spoke to him. Muddy as he was, the children could see that the huge beast was very stupid-looking; as Walter said, there was no room in his head for any brains at all; and he could not be very wise, or he would not allow Tommy to order him about as he did. When told that he ought to go and bathe, he stared for a minute, and then rolled heavily away round a little hillock, followed by his Secretary. The river was close by, for the children could hear the splashing as he walked into the water.

"Let us go and see him bathing," said Walter.

Brontops was standing deep in the water, and Tommy was directing him from the bank.

"I think I should go in a little farther," he said, and Brontops went in a little farther.

"I think it would be nice and cool to sit down," he went on, and Brontops sat down, while Tommy giggled. "Oh do *look* at the state of the water; he *was* in a mess."

"I think I should wash my neck," he said; and Brontops soused his head in the water as deep as he could reach.

"Now I think I should come out and get dry."

His appearance was much improved by his bath, but still he was not a handsome animal: he was very amiable, though, and asked them to come and stay with him at the Lair.

TOMMY DIRECTING BRONTOPS FROM THE BANK

CHAPTER IX

BRONTOPS AND DINO THERIUM

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"WHAT a lovely place for a pic-nic!" Jenny exclaimed when she saw the Lair; "one would only have to clear out those loose thorns and things and it would be a perfect summer-house."

It was a capital place: a deep cosy nook among thick bushes which met overhead, and gave plenty of shade without making it too dark.

"I haven't the sense to clear out the rubbish," said Brontops, sighing; "I wish I had."

"It wouldn't take a minute," said Jenny.

"I'm *afraid* I'm too lazy," he said. "I've nothing in the world to do, and it keeps me as lazy as can be all day."

"Do you mean 'busy'?" asked Walter, thinking he had not heard rightly.

"Some people would say 'busy,' no doubt;

I always tell the truth;" he spoke with a sorrowful air of pride; "and I tell you I am too lazy."

"Ah!" said Tommy, wagging his head gravely, "if *only* there were more people like him."

"I don't think it would be at all a good thing," said Jenny. "Lazy people without any sense can't be very useful."

"Why, the Living World is full of them!" said Tommy, "only they say 'I haven't the time,' and 'I'm too busy,' instead of telling the truth like Brontops. Wait till you're a bit older and you'll see."

"If you are only lazy enough," said Brontops, sinking on his knees and sprawling out like an immense pig, "other folks will do the things they think you ought to do. I've tried it, and I know."

"*There's* honesty!" said Tommy.

"Other folks don't think very much of people like that," said Walter.

"I suppose not," said Brontops; "but I haven't the sense to care what other folks think."

"I don't suppose," said Tommy; "I do *not* suppose that you'd find a creature with less sense than Brontops if you hunted for years."

"Bron-*Bron*-Bron-Tops!" called a deep voice outside.

"That's his friend Dino Therium," said the Secretary. "We always call him Dino. I'll go out and bring him in."

Dino was an animal rather larger than Brontops; his body and legs were like those of an elephant, and he had a trunk many sizes too small for him; the strangest thing about him was the great pair of tusks which came from his chin and curved downwards. He was a queer-looking creature, but there was a brightness in his eye and a quickness in his way of moving which showed he wasn't either stupid or lazy. He shook hands with his trunk, told the children he was very glad to see them, and then turned to Brontops.

"You are filling the whole house, you lazy fellow," he said.

Brontops did not answer; he only grunted.

"We will put him on one side; he'll do nicely to sit on if he's clean," said Dino.

"He's just had a bath," said Tommy; "I thought he should have one."

Dino took a step back and looked at Brontops. "I can manage it," he remarked

HE SHOOK HANDS WITH HIS TRUNK

to himself; and turning his tail towards his friend, he set to work to kick him. They were truly terrible kicks; each one set Brontops, big as he was, quivering like a

DINO, TURNING HIS TAIL TOWARDS HIS FRIEND, SET TO WORK TO KICK HIM

jelly. At last he could stand it no longer and began to get up. No sooner had he raised his forequarters than Dino spun round and, lowering his head, butted him on the shoulder like a bull, knocking Brontops right up against the bushes, where he lay.

"As I said before," remarked Brontops, stretching his head out again, "if you're only lazy enough, other folks will do for you what they think you ought to do for yourself."

"I shall always be happy to do that for you," said Dino cheerfully. "You'll die of laziness before you are much older, Brontops."

"You are the best friend I've got, Dino," said Brontops sleepily.

"He sometimes says things that make me feel really uneasy about my situation," said Tommy in a low voice. "That sounded just like sense, and——"

"It *was* sense," said Walter.

"—And if he grows sensible he won't want any one to think for him," added Tommy dismally.

"It's sad to see a creature go on like

this," said Dino, sitting down heavily on his friend's hind leg. "If he would only try and improve! Like me," and he put on an air of smug conceit that made Jenny long to stick a pin in him.

"Have you taken such great pains to improve?" she asked.

"I have been Nature's most obedient child. On hot days I splash in the shallows, and dig water-weeds with my tusks; or I wallow —like our friend here: an overcoat of cool mud is a comfortable thing to wear on hot days. In cold weather I stand among the rocks and bask in the sun—in short, I make a point of doing exactly what I like best."

"Is that obeying Nature?" asked Jenny.

"Certainly it is."

"Then can you explain why I usually get a licking if I do exactly what I like best?" asked Walter.

Tommy pricked up his ears at the word "explain" and began to clear his throat; but the children wouldn't look at him. Dino sucked the tip of his trunk thoughtfully; at last he said—

"You don't live in the State of Nature; your clothes are not Natural, and your hair isn't Natural."

"We don't live in a state of Nature," said Walter. "Birds and wild animals live in a state of Nature."

"Ah! That's it, you see. As you don't live in the State of Nature you don't obey the laws of Nature, but some others I don't know anything about. What Nature would think quite right—like wallowing in mud on a hot day—your father or mother *might* think wrong—if you had on your best clothes."

"I'm sure it would be wrong, and I'm sure Wally would be punished if he did it," said Jenny.

Dino leaned back and looked at the children's clothes for some time without speaking. At last he said—

"You know, I can't see why your clothes are made like that. You ought to wear suits of plain blacking leather—without any blacking, of course—something that's not easily seen when you have to hide."

"Why should we hide at all?" asked Walter.

Dino was evidently surprised at the question; he looked puzzled, and said half aloud—

"They can't climb; they can't run fast; they can't bite with those teeth, and their claws are not proper claws at all. They *must* hide when stronger animals chase them."

"We don't hide," said Walter proudly. "Man rules all the creatures in the Living World."

"Well, I don't want to be rude," said Dino, "but if that's the case, the creatures in the Living World must be an uncommon poor lot."

"I don't think they are," said Walter; "the Elephant isn't quite as big as the Master Don, but men catch Elephants and tame them and make them work."

Dino put the tip of his little trunk in his mouth and thought for a bit.

"I'd like to know how it's done," he said.

"Men are ever so much cleverer than animals," said Walter.

"Brains!" put in Tommy, who thought he had been left out of the conversation too long already. "How do I fix up things for

Brontops? Brains! Explain things? Brains again! I am the weakest creature going, but my brains save me."

"You can climb," said Dino. "He can't," with a sidelong nod at Walter.

"He is cleverer than me to make up for it."

"That may be," said Dino. "Indeed I think it's *very* likely. But what I say is, I don't see how a creature like him can rule other creatures, unless the other creatures are uncommon poor creatures."

"I guess I will explain it," said Tommy. "It can be done by arithmetic."

"There you go with your long words," groaned Dino. "Some day I'll slip one round your neck and choke you with it."

"The question is, Do you want to understand how man rules all creatures, or do you not?" said Tommy.

"Yes, I do; but I hate arithmetic because it's so dull: you always know what's coming next."

"Not as I do arithmetic," said Tommy. "I only use figures of speech—not common figures;

and I never know myself how a sum will come out."

Walter and Jenny did not know what Tommy meant, and they thought that Dino did not either; it was quite simple, however. This was the way Tommy's explanation went, as far as he was allowed to give it —

"It's very hard, explaining such
A matter as we speak about;
But I shall simplify it much
By leaving all the grammar out.

It seems to me the Rule of Three
Will guide us to the end we seek;
If set to music it will be
Fit for the table in a week."

"Isn't there something not quite right about that?" asked Walter.

"Three, be; seek, week. It rhymes all right, doesn't it?"

"It didn't seem to mean anything."

"It's made up of figures of speech used in versely," said Tommy; "surely you can understand that."

"I'm afraid I don't," said Walter.

"I really don't see your difficulty. I said,

'*if* set to music'; I didn't say you *must* set the Rule of Three to music, but *if* you did it, it would be ready for the table in a week."

"But who on earth is going to eat the Rule of Three?" asked Walter.

"Nobody that I know of. Who said anything about eating it?"

"You did. You said 'fit for the table.'"

"Good gracious! don't you do anything at the table but eat? Do you never do sums nor learn lessons at the table?"

"Of course I do, but——"

"Exactly. Well if you set the Rule of Three to music it would be much easier to learn, and so be fit to learn much sooner. Now let me get on, please.

"If I am cleverer than you,
And he is cleverer than me,
It is an easy thing to do
To find the wisest of the three.

And being found, the case stands thus:—
As I lead Brontops by the nose,
The Elephant he named to us
Obeys the wisest beast it knows."

"Man isn't usually called a beast," said Walter.

"Never mind; we'll call him one for a change," said Dino. "I dare say our little friend has made the matter clear to *you;* I hope so, at any rate, for I don't understand it any better myself."

"I haven't finished yet," said Tommy.

"I don't suppose you have," said Dino. "When you explain a thing it generally takes a whole day."

"And this," said Tommy, throwing up his eyes, "is all the thanks I get!"

"No, no. We are *very* much obliged to you," cried the children; "it was very clever and interesting."

Tommy laid his right paw on his heart, held out his long bushy tail with his left, took three mincing steps to the right and bowed deeply. Then hastily passing his tail into his right paw he laid his left on his heart, took three little steps, sideways, back again, and bowed once more.

"You are *most* kind," he said very gravely.

CHAPTER X

THE TINJENS FAMILY

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THE TINJENS FAMILY

BRONTOPS had been sleeping so peacefully while all the talk was going on that it was quite a surprise when, in the middle of a dead silence, he woke up and said suddenly—

"I was going to say, only I fell asleep by mistake, would my young friends from the Living World care to come for a Dream with me?"

Walter looked at Jenny and hesitated: he had never been asked to "go for a dream" before, and couldn't think what Brontops meant. Jenny looked at Tommy, thinking he might be trusted to seize this chance of explaining something; but he didn't seem to understand that any explanation was wanted, for he only smiled pleasantly at her and began to clean his paws.

"Thanks very much," said Walter; "but how can we do that?"

Brontops raised his head a little and stared at Walter. He was evidently offended.

"When anybody says to you, 'I will take you for a little walk,' do you always answer, 'How can we do that?'" he inquired.

"No, of course not; but then I understand going for a walk, and I never even heard of going for a dream with anybody."

Tommy now saw that there was a chance of explaining. He sat up on his hind legs, thrust out his right paw and began to snap his fingers, crying, "Me, Sir! I know, Sir! Please let me tell, Sir! Me, Sir! I know, Sir!" like a boy half-way down the class when the fellows above him can't answer a question.

"Well, you?" said Brontops in the tone of a schoolmaster.

"When somebody in the Living World," began Tommy, "says 'I will take you for a walk,' he walks, and you walk with him the way he walks. When Mr. Brontops takes you for a dream, he dreams, and you dream

with him the way he dreams. It's quite simple; the thing is done every day."

"It isn't," said Brontops shortly.

"When I say 'it's done every day,' I mean it isn't," said Tommy, "just as you say 'it rained every day,' when it didn't."

"It's a great honour," said Brontops sulkily.

"He only takes visitors for dreams as a very special favour," said Tommy humbly.

"We shall be delighted if Mr. Brontops is so kind," said both children together. "We did not quite understand; that was all," and Brontops looked pleased again.

"Now where should you like to dream?" he asked. "Up or down, or backwards or forwards, or sideways, or round and round?"

"Oh, thanks very much. We will leave that for you to settle," said Jenny. "I am sure you know Dreamland *much* better than we do."

"He ought to, unless you sleep twenty-three hours a day," remarked Dino.

"We will dream backwards," said Brontops, after thinking for a little. "I think that's the most interesting way. You'd like perhaps to dream and see my ancestor Tinjens."

"I don't believe Tinjens *is* your ancestor," muttered Dino, but Brontops took no notice of him.

The children said they should like it very much, so Brontops, nodding lazily, said, "Dream along then," and sank back into his old position with his head stretched out.

He was fast asleep again before the children could ask what they were to do; but as his breathing grew deep and steady, Walter felt himself getting drowsy. With an effort he sat up and looked at Jenny beside him. Her eyes were shut and her head nodded. He thought he heard Tommy say something about making haste to catch them up, and then he felt himself falling, faster and faster. Jenny was with him, and together they looked and saw the earth far away below. The wind shrieked past them as they fell now; the earth was coming up so fast they dared not look down. Would they be dashed to pieces——

. . . . . .

"*I* never planted them."

"You *did*."

"I didn't!"

"Then just tell me how vegetables like

THE WIND SHRIEKED PAST THEM AS THEY FELL NOW

that grew up in the garden without planting."

"I don't know; you'd better ask them. I don't believe they're vegetables at all. They weren't there ten minutes ago."

Walter listened to this conversation, but he was still drowsy, and of course never thought that he and Jenny were being talked about. Now he opened his eyes and saw two huge animals with horns and tusks standing and staring at them. They were rather like Brontops, but not quite so stupid-looking; each had big furry horns on the top of its head, and a pair of sharp ones side by side over its eyes; their tusks were not very long and did not look dangerous.

"Tinjens!" exclaimed Walter.

"Tinoceras Ingens," said the larger animal gravely. "Tinoceras Ingens, T. Ingens, Tinjens Esquire, and Mrs. Tinjens."

"They'*re* flowers," said Mrs. Tinjens; "there's that one all a-growing and all a-blowing before your very eyes!" and she pointed at Walter, who had taken off his hat to her.

"We are not flowers," said Walter, and tried to take a step forward to prove it; but now he found that his feet were sunk over the

tops of his boots in mould, and he nearly fell.

"Then you must be vegetables," said Mrs. Tinjens.

"We are nothing of the sort," answered Walter. "Come, Jen, let's get out of this dirt."

They held on to each other, and after a little struggle got their feet out of the mould and reached firmer ground.

"Well, I never saw a flower or a vegetable go and root itself up like that and walk on to the path," said Mr. Tinjens.

"I've seen it; often and often," said his wife. "They're a new sort of creeper: things you can't keep in one place, and go sprawling all over the garden."

"They're fine healthy plants anyhow," said Mr. Tinjens; "just look at them cleaning up their roots."

"And messing the path," said his wife.

"I know how it happened, Wally," said Jenny, who was busy scraping the stiff mould off her boots with a stick. "We fell on our feet, and luckily on soft ground, or we should

have broken our legs. I wonder where we have fallen from."

"*I'd* like to know where we have fallen to," said Walter.

"It was too bad of that lazy old Brontops

"THEY'RE A NEW SORT OF CREEPER," SAID MRS. TINJENS

to take us for a dream and drop us anywhere like this."

"Perhaps it *is* a dream," said Jenny; but

Walter said "No"; the mud on his boots was much too real.

"This is my garden," remarked Tinjens gravely. "I think you ought to explain how you came up: *we* didn't plant you."

"We didn't come up; we came down," answered Walter.

Mr. and Mrs. Tinjens looked at each other. He said "Well?"; *she* said "Creepers!"

"Look here," said Walter, "we are not plants. We are just a boy and girl, and we have come here: that's all."

"Boy and girl may be plants for all I know," said Tinjens, "unless," as a happy thought struck him, "unless they are animals."

"We come from the Living World," said Jenny.

"And why did you come from the Living World to plant yourselves in our garden?" asked Mrs. Tinjens.

"We couldn't help landing here," said Walter. "If we have done any harm we are very sorry; but we couldn't choose where we would come down."

He looked round to see what harm they

had done. They had only made a few marks on ground which looked as if great pigs had been rooting in it; there was really nothing to make a fuss about. Indeed he could not see why they called the place a garden at all; it was a grass slope, with patches of high grass and bushes, which went down to the edge of a large lake: there was no sign of a fence, nor of anything which had not grown naturally; the spot had nothing to distinguish it from any other part of the land round.

"Do you know Mr. Brontops?" asked Jenny, by way of turning their attention to something else.

"How can they?" whispered Walter. "Brontops wasn't born for thousands of years after these creatures."

"We never heard of him," said Mr. and Mrs. Tinjens together.

"We met him several thousand years from here on our way from the Living World," said Walter, "and he told us you were his ancestors; that's how I knew your name."

"I never heard of him," said Mr. Tinjens, "but I dare say he was speaking the truth.

I'm sure I am *somebody's* ancestor. I can tell that by my family pride. Mine is a grand Family."

"Let's take these—Creepers and show them the Family," said Mrs. Tinjens.

"Look here," said Walter, walking up to her and standing squarely before her nose, "I've told you before we are *not* plants *nor* creepers nor anything of the kind."

"It's just an idea she's got," said Mr. Tinjens; "she will lose it presently, so never mind her. Come and see the Family."

The children followed them up the slope from the lake and climbed a little hillock to look round. It was a grand view. Before them lay the lake, so wide that the hills on the other side were misty and blue in the distance; all along this side, as far as they could see, was lovely green sward dotted with clumps of tall waving grass, bushes, and trees; behind lay a great forest, above which, here and there, peeped the feathery crest of a palm. The most interesting thing, however, was the number of animals; wherever you turned your eyes you saw beasts of the Tinjens kind: big ones

feeding and lying down, little ones playing and fighting or rolling; there must have been thousands of them in sight, singly, in pairs, and in groups.

"What do you think of *that* Family?" asked Mr. Tinjens. "You don't see quarter of it; the rest are spread round the lake."

"It is a very wonderful sight," said Walter. "Are they all your relations?"

"Every one. This is the Tinjens Family seat. We all live on the estate, and it's against the rule of the Family to live off it; so you won't find a single Tinjens anywhere else."

"I don't think I should like to live with *all* my relations always," said Walter, thinking of Aunt Ellen, who was so fond of looking to see if his drawers were tidy, and of asking him questions out of lesson time; and of his cousin May, who screamed when he kept a little frog in his pocket.

"It's our Family pride that keeps us together," said Mr. Tinjens. "We live on the land and die in the water."

"Why do you die in the water?" asked Jenny.

THE FAMILY SEAT

"Because it's the rule of the Family; and it makes a change, you know. If we lived in the water we'd come and die on land."

"I should think you found it rather dull here, don't you?" said Jenny.

"It would be dreadfully dull," said Mrs. Tinjens, "but we make things to do. We have a Family quarrel every Tuesday and Friday, and a Coolness on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Then on——"

"What is a Coolness?" asked Jenny.

"We all stand in the Lake and don't speak: that's a Coolness."

"I interrupted you. Please go on. What were you going to tell me?"

"Tell you? Oh yes. Coolness on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Scandal every Monday from three to five."

"What is Scandal?"

"One goes up quietly behind somebody else, gives a prod with one's horns and tries to get away without being seen. It's great fun at the time, but it leaves so much soreness that things don't come right till after the Family quarrel on Tuesday."

"What happens on Thursdays and Sundays?" asked Walter.

"We are friends on those days for the sake of the change."

"When is lesson time?" asked Jenny.

"We don't have any lessons," said Mrs. Tinjens.

"You don't play *all* the time, do you?" asked Walter.

"We don't play any games at all."

"Well, I must say I think it's the very stupidest way of living I ever heard of," said Jenny.

"We must do *something*," said Mr. Tinjens, as his wife said nothing.

"But why quarrel?" asked Walter.

"Because we haven't anything else to do," said Mr. Tinjens, after thinking it over for a minute.

CHAPTER XI

PHEE AND OH-DON'T-'OP TERYX

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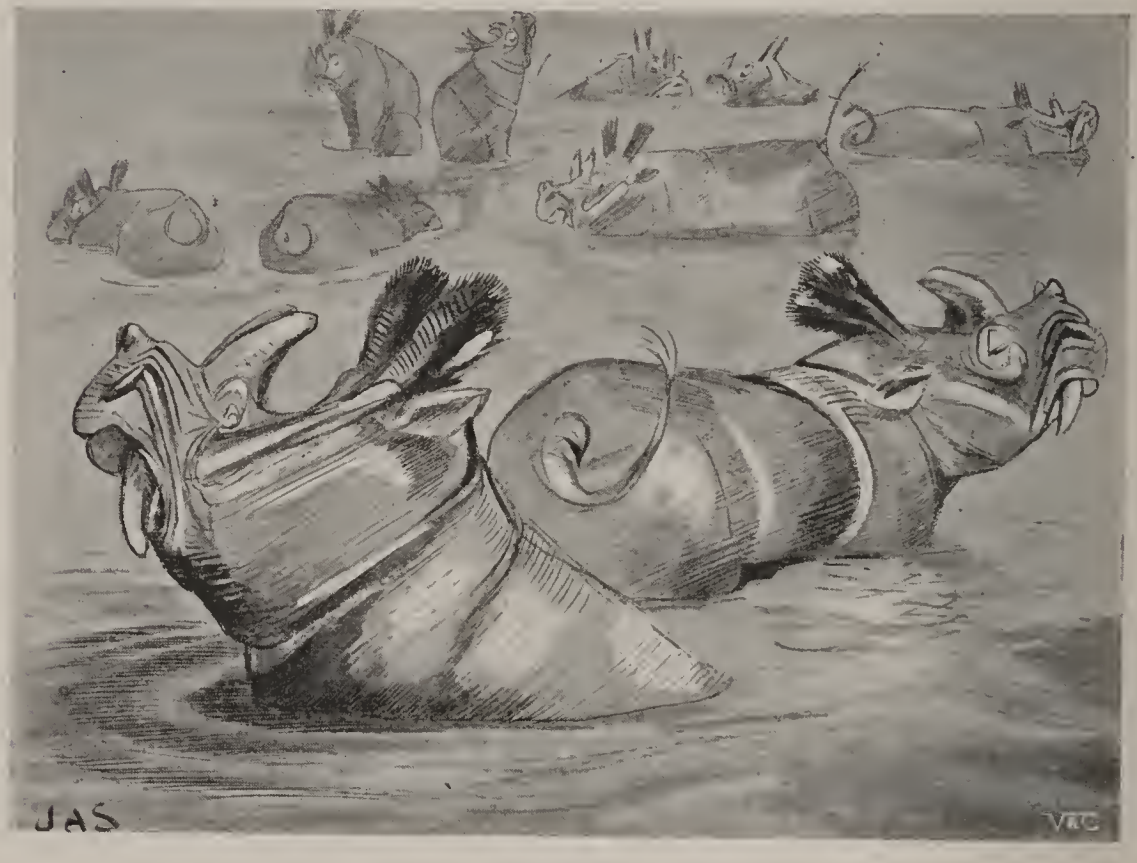
"LET me see," said Mr. Tinjens, screwing his neck so as to turn his little pig-eye to the sun, "it must be Coolness time? Will you join us?"—to the children.

"I think not, thank you," answered Jenny. "We will sit here and look on, if your Family don't mind."

"Oh they won't mind a bit; indeed they would be delighted, because, you see, they love to tell any stranger all about a Family unpleasantness. *Do* stay. We will tell the Family you are here, and they will come in turns."

They strolled away down the slope and lurched into the water, where they stood twitching their tails and looking thoughtfully before them. Only the youngest animals did not join the Coolness; these stayed on the

grass and played Scandal and Family Quarrels for the Nursery. You may have noticed cows standing in a pond on a summer evening. If you watch, you will see they only



A COOLNESS

stand and think and switch off the flies: that is a cows' Coolness party.

"What are we to do, Wally?" asked Jenny when Mr. and Mrs. Tinjens were out of hearing. "Are we to sit here and wait while each

one of these creatures comes to say something disagreeable about the rest?"

"No," said Walter, jumping up; "we don't want to be mixed up in their silly quarrels. We'll be off at once. One good thing is that these stupid animals only live round the Lake, so all we have to do is to get away from it and we shan't see any more of them."

They ran down the hillock towards the forest and were soon pushing their way among huge ferns and feathery grasses, quite out of sight of the Lake and the Tinjens Family.

"I say, Jen," said Walter after a little time, "I wonder where we are going to; the ferns are all gone, and now there's nothing but thorn-bushes and big trees. We must have got right into the forest."

He had hardly spoken when there was a rustling in the leaves and a panting noise; and suddenly a strange little creature, about as big as a sheep, rushed right against Walter and threw him down.

"Look out!" cried Walter.

"I — I — I'm so sorry," said the animal,

drawing back and shaking its head. "Have I hurt you? I am *so* sorry."

It was so penitent that Walter said it did not matter; and asked why it was flying through the wood like that. Was some fierce animal hunting it?

"No," said the creature, looking rather ashamed of itself. "I've lost my temper and was trying to find it."

"I shouldn't think you were likely to find anything rushing about in that mad way," said Jenny.

"Oh, that's a very good way to find your temper," said the animal earnestly. "It's strongly recommended. You rush about until you're quite hot and out of breath, and then throw yourself down all by yourself. Then your temper comes back of itself. I've tried it often."

"Well, has yours come back?" asked Jenny, trying not to laugh.

"I think so. I think it came back when it saw what a bang on the head I gave myself," said the creature, looking foolishly at Walter.

"Then now perhaps you will tell us your name," said Walter, who was busy picking dead leaves and grass off his clothes.

THEY SHOOK HANDS WITH HIM AT ONCE

"I'm generally called Phee," said the little animal.

"Well, Phee, can you show us the way out

of the wood? We are tired of tearing through the bushes. Look how I've scratched my hands."

Phee looked at his hands and gave a whistle of pleased surprise.

"I say," he said, "you have got five claws, just like me. I expect you must be a relation; won't you shake hands?"

Neither Walter nor Jenny could see how they could be related to a creature which was more like a very large rat than anything they could think of, but they shook hands with him at once and said, "Very kind of you to say so," when Phee said gravely, "This is a very great pleasure and honour, and joy; and—it's the proudest day of my life, of course."

Phee knew the forest well, and soon guided them to a path which led to an open glade, where rocks cropped up through the short grass and made tempting seats in the shade of great trees.

"It was here," said Phee, sitting down before them, "that I lost my temper this morning. Mother had invited a friend of mine to come and play with me; we were

going to play at horses and he wanted to be horse."

"I think it was rather silly to lose your temper about such a trifle as that," said Jenny.

"It wasn't that," said Phee. "I shouldn't have minded that so much; but he said he was more like a horse than me, and—and—and I couldn't BEAR it."

"I wouldn't cry about it," said Jenny, for Phee was beginning to sob.

"Look here, Phee," said Walter, "I don't like creatures who blubber about nothing. If you don't wipe your eyes at once I'll give you a good licking."

Phee gave two snorts, a gulp, and another snort. "I — I — I'm smiling now," he said, putting on a grin. "I—I'm all, *all* sunshine and smiles now; just like a horse."

"Horses don't smile," said Walter.

"Well, I *always* thought they did, you know."

"I don't think you are much like a horse," said Jenny. "We come from the Living World where there are lots of horses, and I must say you are not very like one."

"You're more like a great rat," said Walter.

"If you could only see inside me," said Phee earnestly. "If you could, you would say

"SEE ME RUN," SAID PHEE

I am just like a horse inside. I *feel* it, you know. I feel *exactly* like a horse inside."

"You ought to know," said Walter.

"See me run," said Phee. He got up and

trotted and cantered round the glade with a serious face, pausing every now and then to see if the children were watching.

"You move very like a horse," said Jenny when he stopped. She was really glad to be able to say something that would please him, he seemed so dreadfully in earnest about it.

"I should be so much obliged if you would show me how a horse lies down," said Phee, "because I should like to practise."

Walter made him lie on his side and then arranged his legs for him. Phee was very obedient and took great pains, but it was plain that the position was very uncomfortable.

"Hadn't you better lie naturally before you get cramp?" asked Jenny when he had remained for some time with his legs doubled up under him.

"I shall never rest in any way but this, again," said Phee, looking at her solemnly. "Can you tell me what horses eat?"

"Oats and hay, and things of that sort," answered Walter.

Phee's face fell. "I was in hopes you would say, 'Everything they can get.' You

see I've been brought up to waste nothing, and so I eat leaves and little birds, grass and crabs, beetles and bird's eggs—in fact, everything I come across."

"Where's your mother?" asked Walter, who was getting tired of Phee's wish to be a horse.

"She's gone to visit a stranger who has lately come to these parts for the fishing. She'll be back soon, I dare say."

"And who is the stranger?"

"He is a bird—a very large bird. If I were a fish I wouldn't go near him for all the world."

"I'd like to see him," said Jenny. They had not met a bird to speak to since they made the acquaintance of the Moa; and after so many animals, Jenny thought a bird might be a pleasant change. Phee, however, did not seem very anxious to take them, for he began to talk about horses again.

"As you're so eager to be a horse," said Walter, "I'll just make some harness and drive you over to the place where this bird is staying."

"Oh do!" cried Phee in delight; and in five

minutes he had collected enough creepers to make harness for a coach and four.

"Tell us about the stranger while Walter makes the harness," said Jenny.

"I'm afraid there isn't much to tell. We call him 'Oh-don't-'Op Teryx' for a nickname. You see he comes from the London Clay, and drops his h's; and he was always begging the folks he met to walk and not to hop, because hopping got on his nerves. His real name is Teryx, so we got into the way of calling him 'Oh-don't-'Op' Teryx, because he was always saying that."

Oh-don't-'Op Teryx lived all by himself in a nook on the steep bank of a stream. It took some time to find him because Phee enjoyed being horse so much that he took a very roundabout way, pretending he had mistaken a turning. When Walter found out what he was doing, he cut a switch and whipped him, explaining that horses were always whipped when they did wrong. Phee did not like this at all, but as he was the horse he had to bear it.

They found Oh-don't-'Op Teryx standing

on a large stone, doing up the feathers on his back. When he saw the children he opened his beak and stared at them. It was a terrible-looking beak, full of sharp teeth like a saw.

THEY FOUND OH-DON'T-'OP TERYX

"We heard you were here," said Walter, "so we thought we'd come and see you. How are you to-day?"

The Bird only stood gaping, and made no answer.

"Is the fishing good here?" Walter inquired after a pause.

"Very good," said the Bird. "Any more questions to ask?"

"I should like very much to ask you one question," said Jenny, "if you wouldn't think it rude."

"That depends what the question is," said Oh-don't-'Op Teryx. "Ask away."

"Well, I never saw a Bird with teeth in its bill before. Why do you have teeth in your bill?"

"I use teeth in my business: so I have teeth. I don't pay for 'em: so they are put in my bill. I couldn't take 'em out if I wanted to. I don't want to: so I keep 'em in. I can't remember any other reasons at present."

"What is your business, if one may ask?" inquired Walter.

"You may ask, and what's more I'll tell you: I'm a Fisher Bird."

"I should like so much to come out fishing with you," said Walter. "May I?"

"You may come *in* fishing with me any time you like. I could eat a few pounds of

fish this minute, I think. Do you feel inclined to fish now?"

Both Walter and Jenny said they should like to very much, and sat down to strip off their boots and stockings, while Phee, forgetting he was a horse, curled up in the sulks and went to sleep.

"Now," said Oh-don't-'Op Teryx, stepping into the shallow, "you two, take sticks and drive the fish up stream to me. I'll do the catching."

It was really wonderful how clever the Fisher Bird was at catching fish. He stood in the water with his head sunk on his shoulders, looking just as if he were going to sleep; but every now and then his great beak flashed out, and came up with a wriggling fish. Never once did he miss; and no matter how big or how lively the fish, he threw up his beak and jerked it down his throat at once.

"Forty-six," he remarked after a time. "That's as many as I want just now. You two come up above me, and I'll drive a few for you to catch."

Walter thanked him, but said he was afraid they couldn't catch fish as he did; also they didn't eat fish raw like that.

Oh-don't-'Op Teryx shook his beak gravely and said that was a pity: nobody knew what really fresh fish were if they did not eat them the moment they were caught.

"We prefer them cooked," said Jenny, as they waded out of the stream.

"Spoils 'em," said the Fisher Bird. "Why! where's that young Phee gone off to?"

Phee had gone; he had bitten through the harness he had been so proud of, and had marched off home by himself.

"He's gone off in a huff," said Walter. "He seems very easily offended."

"All his people are," said the Fisher Bird, yawning. "What are you going to do now?"

"Stay here, I think," said Walter. "It's getting late, and my sister does not care to wander about the forest at night."

"Got any supper?"

"No," said Walter; "we haven't."

"Then take my advice and go back to

breakfast-time. I suppose you had breakfast?"

"I can't remember, really," said Walter, looking to Jenny for help; "the days and years have got so frightfully mixed up lately."

CHAPTER XII

HORNY HEAD AND CLAY O'SAUR

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THE Fisher Bird was so much interested when Walter spoke of the days and years getting mixed up that he said he should like to hear their adventures; so Jenny told him everything that had happened from the time they lost the golf-ball. The Bird listened very attentively. When he heard about the Sea-cow, his beak opened two inches; by the time Jenny had told him of the Master Don, it was open a foot wide; and when she came to the Tinjens family, it was so wide agape that you would have thought he could never shut it again. In fact, when the story was finished and he tried to close it, he could not do it alone, and Walter had to help him.

"It's the most wonderful story I ever heard," he said, when he was put to rights; "it was all I could do to take it in. I really

thought I should 'urt myself doing it. I'm obliged to you for your help," he added politely to Walter.

"The thing is," said Jenny, "what are we going to do next? You say, 'Go back to breakfast-time.' How can we?"

"Well, after what you have done, I should think a little thing like that would be as easy as—as catching fish—or shelling peas—or dropping a plate. If you ask my advice, you will just collect the things you can't do and put them on one side; that will clear the ground for you to consider what you *can* do."

"Collect the things we can't do?" queried Walter, much puzzled.

"Yes! It's as simple as—as rubbing your nose. I'll do it for you:—

"You've done so much, it seems to me
The things you can't do must be few;
We'll count them up, for it will be
Worth while to keep them out of view.

You can't catch crabs in apple-trees,
Nor make from cream a buttercup;
You can't make cheese-cakes out of cheese,
Nor wake a railway sleeper up.

OH-DON'T-'OP TERYX GAPED

You can't drink from your watch's spring ;
  You can't stop creaking wheels with Greece,
Nor play the tune the kettles sing ;
  You can't grow gooseberries from geese.

You cannot hear the bark of trees ;
  You can't with brushwood do your hair ;
You can't make hare-bells ring or chime,
  Nor with pine-needles holes repair."

"That's really all I can think of for the moment," said the Fisher Bird ; "there may be a few more things, but they can't be very important."

"What we must do now is find a place to sleep to-night," said Walter, who did not see the use of counting up things nobody could do, or wanted to do.

"I've given my advice ; but if you don't choose to take it, you might take your choice of any of these stones," said the Fisher Bird, waving his beak at the boulders which lay along the stream. "I'll show you how to sleep standing on one leg, with your head laid over on your back."

"I'm afraid it wants practice to be able to sleep like that," said Walter.

"True," said the Fisher Bird thoughtfully. "True. Well, look here; go straight up the valley, and near the top you will see a cave in the hillside. Nobody lives there. It goes right back through the Hills of Time."

"Through the Hills of Time?" said Walter. "Where does it come out then?"

"On the other side of the Hills of Time, of course, ages and ages away."

They bade Oh-don't-'Op Teryx good night and set off up the valley, along which the stream tumbled and sparkled. They soon found the entrance to the cave under the roots of a tree on the steep hillside, and as it looked clean and dry they went in. The sun was sinking, and shone straight into it; so they ran on, farther and farther in, until their shadows ceased to dance along the sandy floor before them, and it was nearly dark.

"It's just like a railway tunnel," said Jenny. "And look, Wally! there is the other end!"

The hole was so far away that there was only a little spot of light; but they went on, eager to see what there was on the other side.

"IT'S JUST LIKE A RAILWAY TUNNEL"

"It's very funny," said Jenny; "when we came into the cave I was so tired and hungry, and now I feel as if I'd just had breakfast, and wanted to go out in the garden."

"I feel just the same," said Walter. "I shouldn't be surprised if we'd gone back to breakfast-time somehow; not a bit."

When they reached the far end of the cave they found the hole was so small that they had to creep out on hands and knees. They found themselves on the side of a hill covered with loose stones and low bushes: the country below was not pretty; it was like the pictures of the desert, and only wanted a line of camels with Arabs to be complete; but there was not a living thing to be seen.

"Let's go down and see what there is beyond those rocks over there," said Walter after they had rested.

They ran down, and were just coming to the rocks when a tremendous bellow made them stop and look at each other.

"Cows!" said Jenny; "let's hide somewhere."

There was no time to hide, for that moment an enormous creature three times the size of

an elephant stepped slowly round the rocks and came towards them.

"What in the world can it be?" said Walter.

WHAT THE MONSTER WAS LIKE

You can see by the picture what the monster was like. What made him look so terrible was

his great horns and the curving frill of bone which stood up all round his neck. He came on with short heavy steps, swinging his huge tail from side to side, and eying the children with red angry eyes. When only a few yards off he stopped, lowered his head and gave another bellowing roar which echoed from hill to hill for miles round.

"What are you making that dreadful noise for?" asked Walter, pretending he was not a bit afraid of the creature.

"That is a challenge," said the monster in a thin squeaky voice. "A challenge to fight."

"Who do you want to fight?"

"I've got to settle a small matter with a friend of mine, young Clay O'Saur; he is to meet me here at nine o'clock. Have you seen him?"

Walter said "No," they hadn't.

"He's afraid, I expect," said the monster. "They're all afraid of me. Aren't you little animals afraid of me?" He drew a deep breath, laid his head to the ground, and gave another really terrible bellow that made the earth tremble.

"Well, as you could eat us both at one mouthful," said Walter, "I don't mind confessing that we were a little afraid at first."

"As for swallowing you"—the monster opened his mouth and showed a great pink cavern with teeth as big as biscuit tins—"I suppose I could. But I wouldn't dare eat a slice off the breast of either of you. Though you are both beautifully tender, I'm sure." He added this hastily, as if they might think he meant they were tough and be offended.

"What do you eat?" asked Walter.

"A few trees, an acre or two of bushes or reeds; a rick or two of hay—any little trifle does for me," answered the monster modestly. "I can't touch meat. If I ate a leg or a wing of either of you I should be ill for twenty or thirty years, if I didn't die outright."

"I'm afraid you must be very delicate," said Jenny.

"I *am* very delicate," sighed the monster, sinking down and stretching out his forelegs to rest his head on them, "though you may not think it to look at me."

He did *not* look delicate; his head seemed

to be all bone, and his body was thickly covered with knobs and warts and blunt spines, like a heap of stones by the roadside on which somebody has been breaking bottles.

"I *AM* VERY DELICATE"

"Ah!" he sighed, as he saw them glance at his sides, "nothing can hurt me outside; but, on the other hand, anything can hurt me inside. I have to be as careful as can be."

"I am very sorry," said Jenny sympathetically.

"It's not your fault," said the monster, "I admit that; it isn't any fault of yours. I was born like that. My head is too much for me," he went on; he seemed to enjoy talking of himself. "Sometimes I have as many as three headaches at the same time."

"I never heard of anybody having more than one headache before," said Walter.

"A head the size of yours," said the monster, "couldn't hold more than one, and a very little headache at that; mine's quite different."

Walter and Jenny sat down in the shade of a rock and looked at him as he sprawled, blinking in the sun; he was more like a heap of road-metal than ever, lying at full length.

"Would you kindly just step up on that rock and see if Clay is coming?" he said presently.

Walter climbed up the rock and looked round; in the distance he saw a creature bounding along with great hops like a Kangaroo; it seemed to be talking or singing as it came.

"That's Clay O'Saur," said the monster, dragging himself upon his feet when Walter described the animal. "He's one of those silly dinosaurs that always walk on their hind legs—like you."

Clay O'Saur arrived at this moment, and dropped down on all-fours to scratch his muzzle; he was a foolish-looking creature, with a mouth always open and no ears, which gave his head a curious, unfinished look.

"Come to fight?" drawled the first monster.

"I'm afraid I'm late," replied Clay. "I overslept myself, Horny Head. I didn't hear when I was called: that's one of the drawbacks of having no ears."

"*I* should call it an advantage," said Horny Head. "I hate getting up in the morning. But what I asked you was: Do you want to fight?"

"No," said Clay, standing up and looking about him weakly. "*I* want to be a bird; that's all I want."

"Pretty bird you'd make," sneered the other.

"I can't sing very well, I know," replied Clay humbly. "But oh!"—he danced about

on his hind legs and flapped his fore paws—"I should *love* to be a bird!"

"Do look at him!" said Horny Head. "*I* could sing as well as he could."

He wheeled round suddenly, and, lowering his head, rushed at Clay, who merely jumped to one side and went on flapping his fore paws.

"If you do that again, I'll scratch you," he said, nodding his head. "Mind that: I'll scratch you."

Horny Head grunted, swung round and lowered his head for another charge. Clay stood quite still facing him until he was within a few feet, then he hopped aside as before, and as Horny Head lumbered past struck out with his hind foot, whose claw left an ugly scratch down the monster's flank.

"Do you want to fight any more?" he inquired, "or have you had enough?"

Horny Head did not answer: he turned and charged again, and got another scratch on the other flank; again, and got a third. This went on till he had received fourteen great scratches, and Clay had not been touched.

"Stop them," said Jenny to Walter. "Horny Head's shoulder is bleeding."

"The dust they kicked up was hanging in a cloud so dense that they could scarcely be

THE FIGHT

seen. Walter, remarking that it was no good their fighting if he couldn't see the fun, called out that they were to stop.

"You hear that," panted Horny Head. "Umpire says you are to stop; you're not to scratch any more."

"And you are not to run at him again," said Walter.

"I haven't hit him once yet," objected Horny Head.

"That's your own fault."

"It isn't. He wouldn't stand still."

"Did you expect he would—for you to stick your horns into him?" asked Walter.

"Why—of course!" replied Horny Head, very much surprised.

"Well, he wasn't so silly. The fight is over."

"Then I shan't play any more," said Horny Head, and he marched off. Clay stood looking after him sorrowfully.

"He would be such a nice fellow, you know," he remarked, "if he wasn't so foolish about some things. Do you know what he quarrelled with me about yesterday? Did he tell you?"

"No," replied Walter.

"I was singing: he joined in the song, but couldn't reach my top notes, and wanted me to come down to his compass. I told him it would spoil the tune, and he was offended."

"How silly of him!" said Jenny. "What were you singing?"

This was quite enough for Clay; he cleared his throat and began at once.

CLAY SINGING

"I want to be a bird,
And fly about on wings;
For that's what I have heard
A bird does when it sings.

I want to be a lark,
  Canary or bullfinch;
I'd be, I may remark,
  A raven, at a pinch.

A sparrow or an owl—
  I really don't care what;
But some small feathered fowl
  That need not fear the pot.

Why was my spirit pent
  To hop upon Earth's floor?
Surely I was not meant
  To be a Die-no-saur."

CHAPTER XIII

ICKY ORNIS AND H.R.H. THE SEA SERPENT

THE SEA SERPENT

CHAPTER XIII

ICKY ORNIS AND H.R.H. THE SEA SERPENT

HE lingered over the last line, sighed heavily, and sank down on all-fours, gazing sadly at the children.

"What did you say you were?" asked Walter; "a Di no saur?"

"Yes," sighed Clay. "I belong to that unfortunate family. I shall die without soaring, as the name shows."

"Is that what it means?" asked Jenny.

"That," sighed the monster, "is exactly what it means."

"And you want to be a bird?" said Walter, looking him over. He was about ten yards long, and when he stood up was a great deal taller than a giraffe; anything less like a bird you could hardly imagine.

"It's a curious thing," remarked Jenny thoughtfully, "but quite lately we met a

creature like a great rat and *it* wanted to be a horse."

"I don't know what a rat or a horse may be," said Clay, "but if the animal felt that it ought to be a horse I sympathise with it, because I feel that I ought to be a bird." He rolled his eyes skywards, stood up, and flapped his fore-legs feebly.

"Perhaps you'll become a bird some day," suggested Walter.

Clay smiled sadly.

"There was a message from London about it only the other day," he said. "I had been promised *faithfully* I should become a bird—a great many birds, perhaps—but now there's some difficulty. They say some other creature will become birds, and I—*I*—*I* only want to be a flock of larks—or a flight of swallows—or even a rookery."

"Wouldn't you be satisfied if you were a single bird?" asked Jenny.

"If I were a single bird I should marry at once," answered Clay.

"I mean *one* bird," said Jenny.

"I should like that best, of course; but

then there is so much of me. That it were easier to be, A dozen birds or twenty-three, Than only one."

"I OUGHT TO BE A BIRD!"

"That was quite like poetry," Walter remarked.

"Yes," said Clay, flapping his fore-legs

limply; "you must excuse me; but everything that is light and airy and beautiful, like poetry and birds and music and balloons——"

"And jam puffs," suggested Walter.

"And jam puffs," agreed Clay, "and income-tax, and electric lamps, and bad shillings, go together in my mind. So when I think or speak of birds I often do it in poetry."

"I don't think," said Jenny, "that Papa would say that there was anything light or beautiful about the income-tax."

"It's airy, though," answered Clay; "it's so gay and sprightly you never know what it will be up to next."

"Bother the income-tax!" said Walter. "What's that great bird flying over there?"

Clay twisted his head round to look.

"That's Icky Ornis," he said. "He preens his feathers by the sea, Catching bright fishes for his tea. Ah! could he but exchange with me, And I be Icky Ornis!"

"Look here," said Walter, "I don't mind a song or a bit of poetry once in a way; but if you can't speak of a great clumsy

bird like that without doing it in poetry, you'd better shut up altogether."

"Walter!" exclaimed Jenny.

"I don't care," said Walter, picking up a pebble and throwing it at a bush. "Why should he do it?"

"Why shouldn't he if he likes? I think it was very rude indeed; and you ought to say you're sorry."

Walter stuck his hands in his pockets and glared at the sand: he never liked confessing he had said something he ought not; but he was a very honest fellow and knew he had been rude.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said to Clay: "it wasn't right to say such a thing."

"It's all right," said Clay pleasantly. "Now, shall we seek the pebbly beach, Where Icky Ornis waits to teach—Ahem!—and hear what Icky can tell about the Sea Serpent?"

"The Sea Serpent!" exclaimed both children. "Why, we've heard such a lot about the Sea Serpent. Is he really here?"

"He's *always* in the paper," Walter added, with his manly air.

"He isn't in the paper here," said Clay. "He's in the sea."

"Does he ever come in near the shore?" asked Jenny. "I should *so* like to see him."

"Yes; he comes in occasionally to gather tidings."

"Do you mean to get the news?" asked Walter.

"No; to get tidings. In the sea you get such a lot of salt with news that it spoils it."

"Well, I must say I should like to see him," said Walter. "Just fancy, Jen, if we went out fishing and caught the Sea Serpent!"

"If you went out fishing," said Clay, "it's very much more likely he would catch you; he is about three times as big as I am, and the sea air gives him a frightful appetite."

"Then we most certainly won't go," said Jenny. "Wally, you mustn't. Mother would be so anxious."

"You'd better come and be presented to the Sea Serpent before you say any more," said Clay. "He rules the waves."

"Britannia rules the waves," said Jenny.

"You'd better not tell the Sea Serpent *that*," said Clay.

They were walking as they talked, and presently came within sound of the sleepy plash of the sea. When they got to the

"HI! ICKY!" SHOUTED CLAY

beach they could see Icky Ornis perched on a rock a long way out.

"Hi! Icky!" shouted Clay.

The bird turned his head, then spread his wings, and after flapping heavily over the

wave crests, swooped up and sailed gracefully to the shore. He had a long toothed bill like Oh-don't-'Op Teryx, but was as tall as a full-grown man; he was a fine-looking bird, with a quick, bright eye.

"Oh but why. Can he fly, While poor I, Have to die—" the rest of Clay's sad inquiry was lost in a choky whisper as Icky Ornis alighted and waddled up to them.

"What can I do for you?" he asked politely, looking at Walter and Jenny.

"These young creatures." said Clay, dropping on his fore-legs, "are friends of mine. They have heard so much about you they wish to make your acquaintance."

"Very pleased, I'm sure," said Icky, smiling. It was difficult for him to smile, but, considering how small his face was, he did it rather well. "What can I do for you?" he asked again; he brought his wings across his breast and rubbed them together like a shopman saying, "What article can I show you, ma'am?"

"We should like to see you catch some fish," said Jenny, who was a very tactful little

girl, and feared lest Walter should say bluntly they only wanted to see the Sea Serpent.

"Certainly," said Icky. "If you will just

"WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?"

step out to the rocks yonder and take a seat I will show you the finest fish we have."

"We don't want to *buy* any this morning, thanks," said Jenny. His manner was so like a shopman's, it seemed the natural thing to say.

"Allow me to catch them first," said Icky gravely.

Jenny said, "Thank you very much," and they started to walk along the beach towards the rocks which made a natural pier running far out into the sea. The bird took two or three hops with outspread wings and sailed away, looking behind him once or twice to see they were going in the right direction.

"I hope Mr. Icky Ornis won't think it selfish—" Jenny began.

"He doesn't catch shell-fish," interrupted Clay, "only fishes with scales: he has no scales himself, so the fish bring their own. You may have remarked that fish are always weighed in their scales."

"I was going to say," Jenny resumed, "that it seemed selfish——"

"Oh! I see. *He* doesn't sell fish; he gives them away."

It was no use trying to make Clay understand that what she meant was, Icky might think them selfish to ask him to go to the trouble of catching fish and then not buy any; so she gave it up; and they walked on

to the end of the pier where the bird was waiting perched on a rock just over the water.

"You'll see him go in in a minute," said Clay, who was picking his way carefully among the pools. "He goes in head first, to see there's nothing he might hit his toes against."

"All diving birds do," said Walter, who was wading through every pool they came to, and enjoying himself very much.

"I'm extremely sorry to disappoint you," said Icky Ornis when they came up, "but, to tell you the truth, I don't dare go in."

"Sea Serpent?" inquired Clay, coming down on all-fours and speaking in a whisper.

Icky nodded.

"I thought he was miles away this morning," he said, "but he isn't. He's squirming and rolling and writhing just out there. Look!"

The children started, for right in front of them an immense neck with a little head like an eel's divided the waves and reared up, dripping and shining in the sun. The Sea

Serpent yawned widely and showed teeth that made you shudder.

"And Wally wanted to catch it!" whispered Jenny, turning pale at the very thought.

"Oh no!" exclaimed Walter. It seemed to him the Sea Serpent might hear, and then what *would* happen?

The Sea Serpent saw them, and advanced with majestic jerks, carrying his head like a swan, while the water curled and rippled before his chest.

"Good morning," he said. His voice was like a steamer's whistle. "Some strangers with you, I see."

"Yes, your Highness," replied Clay, standing upright, and making a kind of curtsey by sliding back on his tail. "Some young creatures from the Living World."

The Sea Serpent came nearer to look at the children, but feeling a rock, backed a little way.

"It's a very hot day," he said. "Wouldn't they care for a swim?"

"They can't swim, your Highness," said Icky and Clay together hastily.

Walter could swim very well, and didn't mind going out of his depth, but he felt that it wasn't necessary to mention it just now, though generally he was rather anxious to say when he could do anything.

"That's a pity," said the Sea Serpent; "the water is lovely and warm this morning." Something caught his eye at this moment, and in a flash his neck was a hoop vanishing in the sea; the water boiled, and the neck hooped up again, the head almost hidden by a fish as large as a cod held in the mouth. The Sea Serpent bit it in two, stretched out his neck to swallow one half, then picked up the other and swallowed that. Icky looked at the children and whispered: "There's a warning for you."

Having swallowed the fish, the Sea Serpent turned like a ship swinging to the tide and lay off the rocks, paddling slowly. The children could see his whole length now the water was so clear. He was nearly four times as long as a cricket-pitch.

"I rule the waves," remarked the Sea Serpent, breasting the gentle swell proudly.

"I'm the Prince of Whales. Are those two children good children?" he added.

"Your Royal Highness, they are the very worst children I *ever* saw," replied Clay eagerly. "They are so bad I'm afraid nothing can be done with them."

Walter and Jenny were a good deal surprised at this, and were about to protest when Icky, pretending to trim his wing, looked round and whispered "H'sh."

"I'm sorry for that," said the Sea Serpent. "Had they been good I would have allowed you to present them, though they're not in court dress and it isn't a drawing-room day."

"It's very kind of your Royal Highness," said Jenny, who was still unable to understand why Clay had given them such a bad character.

"Not at all," replied the Sea Serpent: he grinned as he said so, but instantly became grave again.

"What becomes of people who are presented to your Royal Highness?" asked Walter, who saw the grin, and had taken to heart the fate of that big fish.

"What becomes of apples that are presented to your Royal Shortness?" retorted the Sea Serpent, with a chuckle. He evidently saw that Clay did not mean to let the children come near him, for he gave a few strokes with his paddles and moved seawards, pushing up the water like a steam barge. "Good-bye," he said, without looking round. Suddenly he threw his head forward, his great back heaved above the water, his tail twisted high, and came down with a tremendous splash; then, while the water still streamed from his back, his head went down and drew his body after it. The Sea Serpent was gone, in a boil of foam.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FLYMAN

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THE FLYMAN

GONE!" exclaimed Icky, and he clapped his wings against his sides with a shriek of relief. "I'm afraid if we hadn't been here he would have eaten these two young creatures."

"No doubt about that," said Clay.

There was silence for a little time. Walter and Jenny were thinking over the escape they had had; the bird was pluming his feathers, and Clay stood looking out to sea, half expecting the Sea Serpent would appear again.

"Seen Horny Head to-day?" inquired Clay presently. "I had a fight with him this morning, and won."

"You shouldn't fight with him now," said Icky; "he is in a decline. Should he?" he added, appealing to Walter.

"What do you mean by 'in a decline'?" asked Walter.

"Don't you know what declining is? Haven't you learned grammar?"

"I'm learning Latin now," replied Walter, "and I'm in the Fourth Declension."

"Well, do you like declining nouns?"

"They're rather difficult sometimes," Walter admitted.

"Naturally; they're sick and out of sorts and hard to manage: that's the way with Horny Head just now."

"But what has he to do with nouns?" Walter inquired rather impatiently.

"Everything. He is a noun, isn't he? Well, he has been declining for years."

"I hope you don't dislike grammar," Clay said.

"I can't say I like it," replied Walter; "in fact I hate it."

"I can understand you not liking declining nouns," said Clay, "nasty peevish things; but the verbs, now: some of them are charming out of school hours."

"Humpty Dumpty said the verbs were so proud and had such a temper nobody could do anything with them," said Jenny.

"Then Humpty Dumpty, whoever he may be, didn't know what he was talking about," said Clay. "A regular active verb—so long as it isn't in the imperative mood—is a delightful companion for a half-holiday walk in the country. Did you ever make friends with a verb?"

"No, never," answered Walter.

"Then take my advice and make friends with all of them; and if an active verb, particularly To Give, asks you to go and stay with him, don't you refuse on any account."

"Why, please?"

"*Why!* He asks 'Why'?" said Clay, turning to Icky.

"Then tell him why," said the bird. "But first, I vote we go back to the beach and make ourselves comfortable in the shade."

Clay agreed; so they strolled along the rocks and found a pleasant nook under an overhanging cliff. Walter took off his wet boots and stockings and put them to dry in the sun; and when he and Jenny had seated themselves with their backs against the rock, the amiable monster lay down before them

to bring his head on a level with theirs, and sang this Song of a Generous Active Verb:—

"I give because I love To Give,
And never reckon the expense;
I wish that I might always live
In only Birthday Present Tense.

THE SONG OF A GENEROUS ACTIVE VERB

To Give to children who are good,
The pleasure really is immense;
They find that I in every mood,
Have got a Birthday Present Tense.

But children who for nothing cry,
  Want neatness, manners, soap or sense ;
I Shall Give toys to—by-and-by,
  In rather distant Future Tense.

When I Was Giving to a lad
  A little pocketful of pence,
He learned, his conduct was so bad,
  That I had an Imperfect Tense.

(That is, that boy behaved so ill
  I did not give all I was willing,
I doled out halfpennies until
  He said, '*Go* on ; fork out a shilling !'

He may of course have not had any
  Rude purpose ; but it gave offence :
I stopped donations at a penny,
  And never reached my Perfect Tense.)

That is the Tense for which one waits.
  'I give,' 'Shall give,' are full of doubt,
'What will he give? A pair of skates?
  A tart? The bluntest penknife out?'

When I Have Given you a bike,
  And rapture ends your long suspense,
You say 'Dear Verb, how much I like
  You in your really Perfect Tense !'"

"I never thought of verbs in that way," said Walter. "Thank you very much for the song."

"I wonder," said Jenny thoughtfully, "whether Passive Verbs are as nice."

"Hardly," said Clay; "they are lazy, sleepy things, most of them. But I was nearly forgetting, I declare! I promised to sing at a party Lady Megalo Saurus is giving this afternoon. Would you care to come? Lady Megalo is a great friend of mine, and will be delighted if I bring you."

"I should like to go very much," said Jenny, looking at Walter. He didn't care for grown-up parties.

"You will see all the great people of the neighbourhood there," said Clay. "I hope you will come."

"All right," said Walter; "we will. Is it very far? My sister can't walk very far, and we have come a long way already to-day."

"It's only a few thousand years away: a mere step. But I'll tell you what. We'll ask Icky to call a flyman for you two. A pterodactyl will whisk you over in ten minutes."

"I'll do it with pleasure," said Icky Ornis.

"What is a—terro—terro—?" asked Jenny, who had not quite caught the word.

"It is merely a fly—or rather a flyman," said Clay. "Will you call one, Icky? There are generally a few hanging about the rocks yonder. Call the biggest you can, and tell him he will have to take two."

Icky waddled out on to the sand, and flew off after his usual clumsy hops and jumps. The children watched him soar high in the air, and then, evidently having seen what was wanted, speed away behind the hill. Clay looked after him, sighing heavily, and from the movement of his lips he seemed to be saying more poetry to himself.

"Why does the flyman hang about the rocks?" asked Jenny.

"Oh, he knows it's a good place to look for his fare; he picks up a lot on the sea-shore."

"That reminds me," said Walter. "What will his fare be?"

"That's not very good English," said Clay, smiling. "He fares on fish, and small birds, and small animals."

"I mean what will his *fare* be to Lady What's 'er name's house?" said Walter.

Clay gazed at him doubtfully.

"If you mean, 'What will he eat at Lady Megalo's?' I don't suppose he'll eat anything. You wouldn't ask a flyman who took you to a party to come in and have something to eat?"

"Of course I shouldn't; but I should give him some money for taking me."

"Well, if the fellow asks for anything, just tell him to come to me. I'll arrange all that. Here comes Icky with a flyman. The biggest in the neighbourhood. Isn't he like a perambulator?"

"I don't see how he is like a perambulator," said Jenny. "He is just like a huge green lizard, with a dragon's head and a bat's wings. He *is* a great dragon out of a story-book."

"He can only carry little people," said Clay; "that's why he's like a perambulator."

The flying dragon was not at all at home on the ground: as Walter said, he dragged himself along "like a mouse dipped in treacle," with his huge leathery wings hanging in loose folds along his sides. His great goggle eyes and the teeth he kept on showing made him a very ugly monster indeed.

"I want you to take these young creatures over to Lady Megalo's place," said Clay. "Can you take them both?"

"Shall I take 'em inside, or out?" asked the dragon, with a grin.

"CAN YOU TAKE THEM BOTH?"

Clay stood up, stalked over to him, raised his leg and gave him such a kick that it brought the tears to his eyes.

"You needn't think that because you can

fly you can say just what you please," he remarked severely. "You will carry my young friends on your back, and if you drop them, or bite off one of their legs—only one of their feet even—I'll come and break every egg in your nest. *I* know where you live."

"*I'm* not goin' to hurt 'em," said the dragon. "Come along and get on my back, and don't go and stick your feet through my wings."

Jenny did not much like the prospect of the ride. Supposing she or Walter did make a hole in his wing by accident? He might come tumbling down from the sky at once; one knows how a bladder splits from the tiniest hole, and when the creature was flying his wings looked just like bladders.

"Hadn't we better take off our boots?" she said.

Clay caught the flyman's wing by the tip, pulled it out to its full spread and drummed upon it with his fore-paw.

"You might kick at that for a week," he said, "and never make a mark. Just seat yourselves comfortably behind his shoulders, and you will be quite safe."

He helped them up, while the huge dragon twisted his neck to look round and make remarks.

"If your boots is clean," he said, "I don't mind your puttin' of your feet on the cushions."

"Never mind his stupid chaff," said Clay. "He is a very honest creature really, but has no manners at all; none of his class have."

"Gaarn!" said the flyman, with a husky laugh. "You're a-comin' too, ain't yer? Oo's a-goin' to pull me out if I gets stuck in a star-drift?"

Clay took no notice until he had seen the children properly settled, then he turned to him and told him he was to fly low and steadily. "You're not on any account to go chasing birds or anything; you are to keep near the ground so that the young people will not be giddy."

"It'll be a bit extra then," said the flyman, "because of all them hills."

"Very well; away you go. You can call here to-morrow."

"You're a Dinosaur, you are, Sir," said the flyman, much pleased; "a real Dinosaur, you are. Goo' day, Sir."

"I suppose he means 'a real gentleman,'" said Jenny.

"I dunno wot a genleman may be," said the flyman; "but if a genleman is one wot gives his flyman double, then a genleman's the same as a Dinosaur."

He crept up a mound of sand, working his wings as he went, and reaching the highest point, launched himself with a few whistling wing-beats and skimmed away over the sand.

"How funny it is!" exclaimed Jenny, holding on to her hat. "He seems to be working all over."

It was very odd. Under the close downy fur which covered his back you could feel the muscles moving in every direction; the great wings whistled at every stroke, and the dragon, with his head held well back, breathed like a horse.

"How jolly!" said Walter. "You can see such a distance. Look! there's Clay coming after us. Doesn't he go at a rate? And there's Icky gone back to the rock where we saw him first. And look! I declare that's Horny Head asleep under that tree!"

"HOW JOLLY!" SAID WALTER; "YOU CAN SEE SUCH A DISTANCE

They could see everything in front and behind, but the wings spreading out from their feet like pointed sails hid the view on either side. The great leathery sheets swelled and sank as they fell and rose in swift regular beats; now and again when the flyman swerved in his course the leathern fan at the end of his tail fluttered like a flag in the wind.

"It's a *lovely* ride," said Jenny.

"Gled you like it, mem," said the flyman, rolling back his left eye to look at her. "It's a pleasure to kerry passengers as enjoys the ride."

"Do you carry many?" asked Jenny, pleased to find him so amiable.

"Not many, mem. I kerry messages most times; but if I drops them in the sea I gets into trouble."

"Drop a message in the sea? How can you do that?" asked Jenny.

"It slips out of my memory," answered the flyman; "there's a hole in it. I've been meaning to hev it mended this long time, but my missus, she says, 'Ga-arn! you want a new 'un.' And how's pore workin' folk to get a 'spensive thing like a new memory, I'd like to know?"

"Why don't you write down your messages?" asked Walter.

"Wot? Me? I hev'n't a quill in my wings; you can see that for yourself, Sir."

"Steel pens—" began Walter.

"I've bin a honest creetur all my days, Sir, and I ain't a-goin' to begin to steal now. Yonder's Lady Megalo's place, Sir; we'll be there in a minute. Nice lady she is, tōo, Sir, and one of the biggest people hereabout. Sit back a little, if *you* please. I turn down here."

His head went forward and his tail bent up; and before the children knew exactly what he meant, he alighted with a flutter, and the ride was over.

CHAPTER XV

A DINOSAUR'S PARTY

CHAPTER XV

A DINOSAUR'S PARTY

THEY had only just climbed down from the dragon's back when Clay bounded up, panting. They waited a few minutes for him to recover breath, and then went to be introduced to Lady Megalo, who stood with her fore-paws loosely clasped, under a tall palm-tree, awaiting the arrival of guests. A few had already come, and were strolling about in pairs or talking in little groups. All were huge creatures; not one was under ten feet high, and Walter and Jenny felt very small indeed.

"So *kind* of you to come," she said to Clay as he offered his paw. "I've had such a disappointment this afternoon. My cousin, Sir Ato Saurus, sends to say he can't possibly leave his den. Six of his ribs and his right hind leg can't be found anywhere. Search

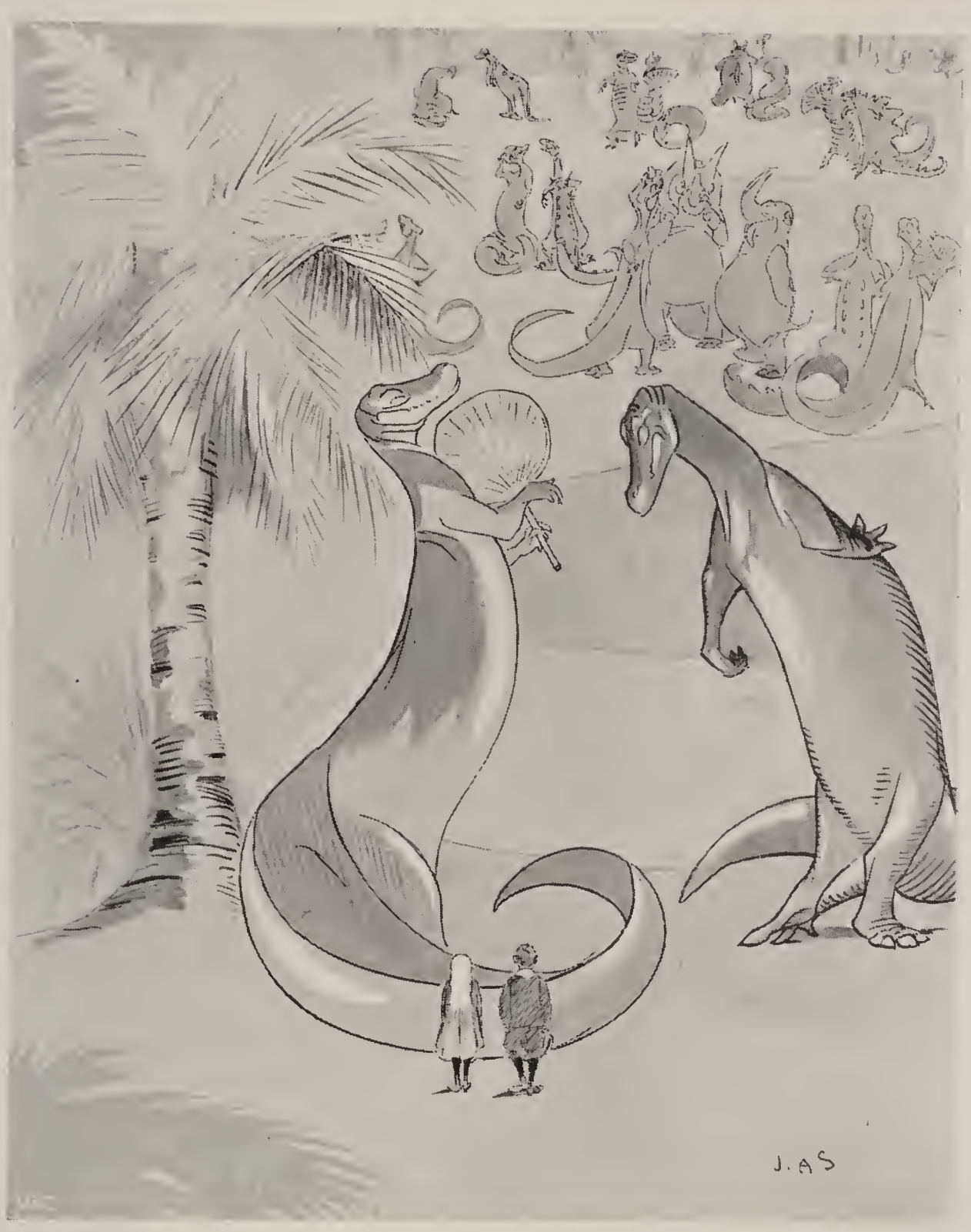
high and low, where they will, those bones can't be found. *Isn't* it a bother?"

"I'm extremely sorry to hear that," said Clay; "I was in hopes that he was quite restored by this time."

"It's my belief," said Lady Megalo, "that those learned London doctors don't understand his constitution. Quite restored! It's impossible to say when the poor fellow will be able to move. He has begged and prayed those London people to attend to him, but they won't; the last thing they said was that they hadn't made up their minds how many ribs he ought to have! *He* answered, 'Give me a hind leg, and I'll do without any more ribs.'"

Jenny noticed that every now and then as Lady Megalo talked she threw a side glance at her tail and moved it into a new curve, like a lady arranging her train.

"I don't believe the London people know as much about us as they say they do," said Clay. "You know Icky Ornis, the little fishmonger where I live? Well, he *declares* he ought to have a tail, and they won't give him one."



"SO KIND OF YOU TO COME!"

"I don't trouble myself much about the

LADY MEGALO ARRANGING HER TRAIN

affairs of the lower classes," said Lady Megalo "but when that poor flyman came to me the

other day and said they talked of taking away his wife's eggs I really *was* indignant."

"I didn't hear about that."

"It seems that somebody declares she never laid them. It would be all very well if some other creature claimed the eggs, but until it is proved they don't belong to her I think she should be allowed to keep them."

"Certainly," said Clay.

Walter and Jenny listened with great interest. Lady Megalo smiled at them occasionally, but she evidently did not think them important enough to shake hands with.

"Now, my dear Mr. O'Saur," she said, after a pause, "I must positively send you away to talk to my friends; they're all *dying* to see you: and I have promised them that you will sing for us presently."

She turned to greet an immense creature as "My *dear* Don Iguano," and Clay moved away, beckoning the children to follow him.

"You mustn't mind if Lady Megalo looks down on you," he said. "Being one of the biggest people about here, she is accustomed to be looked up to a great deal. And you

know people generally look down upon people who look up to them."

"We don't mind," laughed Walter. "But what a funny thing that was she said about her cousin; he couldn't go out because his ribs and leg were missing."

"It's not funny at all," said Clay; "it's very sad. The Dinosaurs are the oldest families, and Sir Ato Saurus belongs to one of the very oldest families of all. I can't see anything funny in the decay of a noble family."

"I'm very sorry," said Walter; "of course I did not understand that that was meant; it is very sad."

"Please, who is that creature over there with the great spikes on his shoulders?" asked Jenny.

"That is a very pleasant young Dinosaur named Skelly. By the way, I think I ought to mention that it is not usual to call people of our class 'creatures.' You wouldn't call a Duke or an Earl a 'creature,' you know; and Dinosaurs don't like it."

"I must remember," said Jenny demurely.

"Skelly belongs to an old family, like the rest of us," resumed Clay; "he's a nice fellow,

and I wouldn't say a word against him; but some people sneer at him and say he's not genuine."

"Why do they say he isn't genuine?" asked Walter.

"Because he is plated. The fact is, he's smaller than most of us, and wouldn't be safe unless he wore armour."

Skelly was small compared with most of the other Dinosaurs, not being much over eleven feet high; but he was quite the most dangerous-looking of all. Besides the sharp spikes on his shoulders, his back was covered with bony plates studded with rows of sharp spines and knobs like the nails in a church-door.

"How d'e do, Skelly?" said Clay. "Let me introduce two young friends of mine."

"Pretty well, thanks. But, my dear Clay, where in this world did you find these little creatures?" Skelly dropped on his left fore-paw as he spoke, and stared hard at the children.

"I didn't find them in this world at all: they don't belong to it, I believe."

"They are very nicely made," said Skelly,

"more ornamental than usual, perhaps; but very well finished."

"They've got all their bones about them," said Clay with a sigh; "that's more than most of us can say."

Walter couldn't help smiling at this. Skelly instantly pointed at him and said—

"That one is *not* quite complete: he wants two of his teeth."

"They were knocked out at football," said Walter.

Skelly gazed at him thoughtfully for a minute, and then, turning to Clay, asked what he had been doing lately.

"I had a fight with Horny Head this morning and beat him," answered Clay, who seemed very proud of it.

"He wanted to fight me the other day," remarked Skelly. "I simply turned my back on him."

"It's a fine thing to be able to win by simply turning your back on your enemy," said Clay enviously.

"But doesn't it look as if you funked—I mean, were afraid?" asked Walter.

Skelly turned round and showed his back.

"Does that look as if it were afraid?" he inquired over his shoulder. "I may be afraid in front sometimes," he added, facing round again, "but never at the back."

"I don't quite understand," said Walter.

"Well, you have fought with a fellow bigger than yourself sometimes, perhaps?"

"Yes, I have," said Walter. "The very last term I was at school I fought Thomson minor and Jack Allen; they're both bigger than I am. I licked Thomson minor, though."

"And weren't you just a *leetle* bit afraid?"

"If I was, I took jolly good care not to show it."

"Of course: my own plan exactly. When I am afraid in front I turn my back, so that I shan't show it."

"But the other—Dinosaur must see you're afraid if you turn your back," persisted Walter.

"No," said Skelly. "If I trembled all over he would see, of course, but I only tremble in front, not at the back; at least I may tremble under my armour, but it can't be seen."

Walter saw it was no use arguing with him,

so he gave it up, and remarked that there were some very interesting-looking people at the party.

"There are one or two uncommonly foolish people," said Skelly. "Have they seen old Steggo?" he added to Clay.

"No; we've only been here a very short time. Is he here?"

"Over yonder," said Skelly, pointing; "let's go and talk to him."

"Is Mr. Steggo a Dinosaur?" asked Jenny as they walked towards the animal Skelly had pointed out.

"Yes; he is one of the wisest of us. There isn't a Dinosaur alive with more wisdom than Steggo; you'd never think it to look at him."

"Isn't that often the way with really clever people?" Jenny asked, feeling that this was quite a grown-up question.

"Not to show their brains? Yes, perhaps it is; but few people hide their brains as well as Steggo does."

The Dinosaur to whom Clay now introduced them was in some ways the strangest-looking

animal the children had seen yet. He was as big as Horny Head, and looked even larger because he had a habit of standing on his hind legs and tail and making himself look as tall as possible. His head was so small compared with his body that it looked as if it had been given him in mistake; and on his back he wore a row of great bony plates standing upright from his neck down to his tail, the end of which had pairs of ugly-looking spikes on it.

When Clay said, "Good afternoon, Steggo!" he looked down sleepily, and sinking on his haunches held out his paw.

"I have been telling my young friends here," continued Clay, "that you are the wisest Dinosaur alive; so of course they asked to be introduced."

Steggo smiled and looked at the children. They agreed afterwards that if they had not been told he was so clever they should have thought he was extremely stupid.

"Yes," he said, "I am wise, very wise; very, very wise indeed. Is there anything you want to know?"

There were a good many things both Walter and Jenny wanted to know, but neither of them could think what the things were at the moment; that's so often the way, you know. After a moment Walter said—

"Could you tell me if father will send me to Eton next year?"

Steggo shook his head very slowly, and smiled.

"I didn't mean to tell you anything about yourselves," he said. "I meant about *my*-self. That's what I'm so wise about; my own self." He smiled again, and looked more stupid than ever.

"Will you please tell us why you carry those great things on your back?" said Jenny.

"That's an intelligent question; and deserves an intelligent answer," said Steggo. "When *I* know why they're on my back, I'll let you know. I don't know now; and I'm far too wise to try and explain."

"There!" said Clay, "take a note of that! It's real wisdom, that is."

It was rather a disappointing sort of wisdom, the children thought; they stood in silence for a minute until Steggo threw out his paw

at Walter and said, "Why have you got such a big head?"

"I—I don't know," replied Walter. "It isn't a bit bigger than any other fellow's."

"It is," said Steggo. "I suppose, now, you keep your brains in it—at least all the brains you've got."

"Everybody's brains are in his head," said Walter, thinking this Dinosaur might be wise, but was very disagreeable.

"Now don't you think," said Steggo, folding his arms, "that your head is the very worst place to keep them?"

"Why?" asked Jenny and Walter together.

"Why! If a cocoanut, or a thunderbolt, or a flower-pot happens to fall, where would it hit you? On the head. If you," to Walter, "fight with another fellow, where does he try and hit you? On the face—that is, the head. Can't you see that your head is the very worst place to keep your brains?"

"Where do you keep yours?" asked Walter, thinking, as he said after, that he "had him there."

"I keep only a very few brains in my

head," answered Steggo, "only the brains I want to look after my eyes and nose and ears and mouth. All the rest, ten times as much, I keep in a safe place down in my body. That's where my wisdom comes in."

At this moment there was a cry of "Clay! Clay!! Where's Mr. Clay O'Saur?"

"Here!" answered that Dinosaur, clearing his throat. "Here I am! Who wants me?"

Half-a-dozen Dinosaurs of different shapes and sizes came hurrying up, saying, "Lady Megalo says you promised to sing; and we won't let you off on any account. It will be *such* a treat!"

Clay cleared his throat again, and said if they really wished to hear him sing, he should be delighted—if somebody would play his accompaniment.

"There's nobody here who could, I'm afraid," said a lady Dinosaur. "But I do *hope* you won't refuse for that reason."

"If Miss Polly Canthus asks me to sing unaccompanied," said Clay, with a bow, "I can only consent."

All the Dinosaurs clapped their paws at this, and, under Lady Megalo's directions, made a ring round Clay.

"I will sing you," he said, "the Song of the Dinosaurs."

At which everybody cheered.

THE SONG OF THE DINOSAURS

"When, through your window bars
You scan the world of stars,
  You dream long dreams;
Haply you do not know
Tnat this old world below
  With marvel teems.

Into past ages peep
Where Extinct Monsters sleep
  Turned into stone.
Dig, and the rock betrays
Creatures of other Days
  Buried alone.

Though Man has made Earth tell
Secrets she kept so well
  From age to age,
He has but gained a look
In her great history book
  And seen a page."

"FLY FOR YOUR LIVES!"

He looked at Walter and Jenny as he sang, and they felt that he was singing at them; but they had no time to say anything, for, the moment the clapping and cheering was over, Lady Megalo cried—

"Tea, Tea, Tea! Where are those children? Walter! Jenny!"

"FLY FOR YOUR LIVES!" shrieked Clay. "She'll eat you."

"Tea! Tea!——

. . . . . .

"IS READY!"

"That wasn't Lady Megalo's voice," said Walter. "It's mother's."

"Who's did you think it was?" asked Jenny.

"Why, Lady Megalo's, of course. Don't be stupid, Jen; you were at the party too."

"*Was* I?"

"Of course you were: you came the whole journey with me."

Jenny could only tilt back her hat and stare at him.

"I've been asleep till a minute ago," she said. "Tell me about the journey as we go

in to tea. There's your golf-club under the tree. Come along! Mother's calling again."

"It's late," said Walter. "There are the cows going home, and the shadows are quite long. Let's run: I'll tell you all about the journey at tea."

I happened to be in the drawing-room when Walter and Jenny came in through the French window from the garden. They asked me to have tea with them. So that was how I heard all about Walter's journey and put it into this little book.

THE END

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